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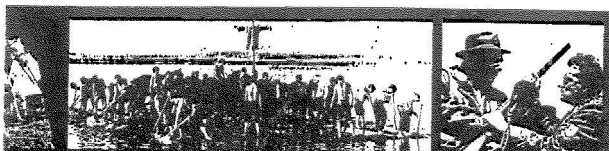
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Editorial

A thread which has been running through a number of recent issues of this journal has been that of the subject within the social formation. The subject in question is by definition non-transcendent (it is not consciousness) and non-humanist (it is not the ego or the 'self'), but equally not the non-entity of behaviourist theory. The problem is that, having said this, and having identified a concept of subject relations, the impression can easily be generated that the subject thus identified possesses, after all, a transcendent and supra-historical role, akin to that of Spirit in the Hegelian system. Specific inscriptions of subject relations in particular discourses and at particular places in the social formation are, or appear to be, subsumed under a single category, and that category is thought to be effective in reality. To produce a unitary concept, however, is not to say that there also exists, corresponding to it, a single unitary 'thing', an essence making itself manifest here, there and everywhere in History. On the contrary, subjects are always specific to the relations in which they are produced, and the important thing, from time to time, is what each specificity is – a specificity which is governed by general laws only to the extent that in every discursive representation there is always an inscription of subject position and this position is structured on a heterogeneity.

Steve Neale's article uses the concepts of subject position and heterogeneity to criticise traditional humanist notions of propaganda. He argues that propaganda films require to be seen, politically, in terms of the positionality they provide for the socially located spectator. There is on the one hand a question of textual relations proper, of mode of address, but on the other hand also one of the politico-historical conjuncture. The binding of the spectator takes place, not through formal mechanisms alone, but through the way social institutions impose their effectivity at given moments, across the text and also elsewhere. The argument is constructed principally around an analysis of the particular example of Nazi films, both those which are propagandist and those in which a National Socialist ideological position is inscribed through classic fictional modes. It raises also the questions of

- 6: systems of filmic address which can be used to break down and challenge the ideological and positional unity of dominant discourses.

The social and historical construction of meaning is also a concern of Phillip Drummond's article, though in a different sense. *Un Chien Andalou* is a film that has become part of the received canon: as Buñuel film, as surrealist film, as monument of the avant-garde. In his analysis, Drummond sets out to release the film from the incrustations of contemporary and subsequent doctrine – not so as to perform the impossible task of restoring it to us, now, in some pristine state as if its history had never existed, but so that it can be re-seen, with all its history, in the full force of its productivity. The article also focusses on the famous 'prologue', and here takes issue with Linda Williams's analysis of that sequence published in *Screen* v 17 n 4, arguing that the 'figures' of metaphor and metonymy can in no way be held to exhaust the productivity of meaning in the sequence. The main burden of critique, however, is reserved for symbolic interpretations of the film – even, and indeed especially, when the symbolism discovered is 'psychoanalytic'. It is not a question of being against interpretations – which, within a Freudian schema, have a very precise, if limited, role to fulfil – but of challenging the fixity of interpretation which is a cornerstone of artistic and literary criticism and which is if anything further rigidified by an application of quasi-Freudian veneer.

Much of the interest of *Un Chien Andalou* lies in its position on the frontiers of different 'avant-gardes'. Writing in *Studio International*, Peter Wollen has argued, persuasively, for a broad division of the film avant-garde into two branches, one mainly continental European and the other mainly North American, but with various links between each other and also with more mainstream practices. Of these it is the North American branch which has most often in recent years arrogated to itself the title avant-garde as an honorific term. (In Europe it is on the whole more common to treat the avant-garde as something historic, which did its work in the early part of the century.) The term avant-garde itself is one which needs to be challenged, and its practices re-located in terms of their different determinations. This is something we hope to engage with in our next issue. Meanwhile Al Rees's article in this issue confronts the problems raised by the actual diversity of filmic practices and their rationales within the 'American' branch of the avant-garde, particularly as regards the critique of illusionism. Following on from Deke Dusinberre's article in our last issue,* he argues for the importance, within

* The correct title of this article is as given on the contents page, 'Consistent Oxymoron: Peter Gidal's Rhetorical Strategy' (give or take a punctuation mark), and not 'Theoretical Strategy' as misleadingly claimed on the heading on p 79.

American modernism, of strategies which do not reject signification as such (as much 'anti-illusionist' work appears to do) but work on it to produce different discursive and subject relations. 7

The crisis role of modernism in breaking down the fixity of an ascribed subject position in the 'authored' text has been argued for most strongly by Roland Barthes and by Julia Kristeva. In this context it is worth signalling the appearance of three recent publications: Mark Nash's pamphlet on *Dreyer* (BFI, 75p), which draws heavily on Kristeva to analyse the production, and undermining, of religious discourse in Dreyer's films; *Image-Music-Text*, an anthology of essays by Barthes, including 'The Third Meaning' and 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein', edited and translated by Stephen Heath (Fontana £1.50); and Rosalind Coward and John Ellis's book, *Language and Materialism* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £2.25 paperback), reviewed by Gillian Skirrow in this issue of *Screen*.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we have to record the death this summer, following a cycling accident, of Martin Walsh. Martin, whose name will be familiar to readers of our Edinburgh Brecht issue (v 16 n 4, Winter 1975/76) and to readers of other film magazines, particularly *Jump Cut*, had been due to return to England from Canada this autumn to take up a teaching post at Kent. Our sympathy goes to his family, friends and colleagues and all who, like us, feel his loss.

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH.

SCREEN EDUCATION

Contents of Number 24 (Autumn 1977)

Philip Simpson, 'Directions to Ealing'; Victor Burgin, 'Looking at Photographs'; Griselda Pollock, 'What's Wrong with Images of Women'; Christine Gledhill, 'Whose Choice? Films on Abortion'; Gill Davies, 'Recent BFI Publications', SEFT's Response to the Annan Report.

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Propaganda

Steve Neale

What this article aims to do is to outline the theoretical bases for the specification of propaganda in relation to the cinema. The importance of the consideration of propaganda lies in the way in which it cuts across a number of traditional divisions and demarcations: between art and politics, between documentary and fiction, between text and institution. This 'cutting across' has led, not to a re-thinking of these categories and their boundaries, but to the production of a set of insoluble contradictions. What is required, therefore, is a process of re-thinking, the replacing of propaganda within a different conceptual space. That space is to be found within current work, in *Screen* and elsewhere, on the theory of ideology. But it is a space that has to be worked for, opened up, since propaganda also poses problems within this area, especially as regards the following: the conceptualisation of and differentiation between modes of address, not only at the level of the text, but also at the level of the institution which produces the text and in which it is embedded; the specification of the relationship between artistic practices and ideological and political apparatuses and institutions; and the relationship of both to the conjuncture. In order to focus these problems two areas in particular will be discussed: a group of Hollywood films, made in the 1930s, which have generally been classified as Populist, a group of films therefore which highlight the issue of the inscription of a specific ideology in a non-propagandist manner; and two films, closely related in theme, made in Nazi Germany at the beginning of the war and in the context of a specific, politically motivated, ideological intervention by the Nazi state, *Jud Süß* and *Der ewige Jude*. Before turning to these areas, however, it is necessary to interrogate traditional conceptions of propaganda, in order to pinpoint the contradictions engendered by them, and therefore

- 10 focus a number of the problems that need to be re-thought and re-posed.

THE LIBERAL POSITION

Propaganda is predominantly discussed from a distinct liberal humanist position, certainly in relation to the cinema. The components of this position can begin to be drawn from the following quotation:

'... the propaganda film aims to impose a political or "ideological" point of view and to force its spectators to adopt this point of view without thought or consideration; and this with the aim of serving a determinate cause. The propaganda film is essentially a vehicle for ideas' (François Chevassu, 'Le Film de Propagande', *Image et Son*, n 188, Nov 1965, p 11).

A 'vehicle for ideas', propaganda nevertheless involves the suppression of 'thought or consideration'; inextricably bound to 'ideology', it yet precludes activity of the mind. These paradoxes stem from the subordination of art and ideas to politics and the mark of that subordination is force, the very principle of politics, of the realm of relations of power. Thus art is forced to serve a cause and the spectator is forced to adopt a point of view; ideas become ideology, art becomes propaganda, and 'point of view' less the sign of a validated aesthetic coherence than the mechanism of a rigidly imposed political position. These paradoxes also stem from an intermeshing of three distinct ideological strands, from the mutual incidence across the concept of propaganda of an ideology of subjectivity, an ideology of politics and an ideology of art. Conceived in this way they are less paradoxes internal to a distinct and coherent position than symptoms of the work of that process of intermeshing, contradictions engendered at points of mutual incidence where full coherence is impossible. Moreover, contradiction is not only a result of the interweaving of the three strands. It is also internal to each. And since the liberal humanist conception of propaganda not only dominates its formulation and discussion, but also entails the rejection of a certain kind of politics, the demonstration of these contradictions has a political as well as a theoretical importance.

The intermeshing and mutual incidence I am referring to can perhaps be most clearly demonstrated in the following quotation on Soviet montage cinema:

'Eisenstein and Pudovkin turned the director into a dictator able, by means of montage, to direct the audience's experience in the minutest detail – its field of vision, thoughts, associations, emotions and conclusions.

'In the 'forties, the French critic André Bazin suggested an

alternative in a somewhat belated attack on the totalitarian approach to films of the Russian authorities. Bazin attempted to formulate the aesthetics of a democratic cinema; he wanted a cinema in which reality was not, as in the Russian films, robbed of all its complexity for the purpose of creating predetermined emotions and simple effects. Audiences should not have perceptions and reactions forced upon them but should be given freedom of choice and opportunity to make up their own minds . . .

Propaganda has followed Eisenstein's road and not Bazin's. It cannot afford to be democratic. Its purpose is to force people into a specific commitment' (Leif Furkhammar and Folke Isaksson, *Politics and Film*, Studio Vista, 1971, p 152).

Three areas of incidence then, locked together, overlapping, crossing one another: the subject (audience and spectator), politics and ideology (democracy and totalitarianism) and art (montage and realism). It is worth pulling out and examining these three strands, though continuing to bear in mind that they constantly interrelate.

The spectator is the object of an 'assault'. The audience is 'directed' by a 'dictator'. Passive, abject and malleable, spectator and audience of propaganda are bound necessarily to its message and point of view: there is no choice. On the other hand, there is the subject of realism, whether in the Bazinian sense as instanced above or in that of documentary, the film of information rather than propaganda, faithfully reflecting the real rather than distorting it for political ends:

'One can see what separates propaganda from information: an absence of arguments permitting untruth, the use of affective reactions which alienate judgement, the isolation of a fact and its "analysis" out of context entirely, making comparison impossible . . . [On the other hand] if a film uses genuine arguments to demonstrate its case irrefutably without lying even by omission, if it provides you with the totality of elements necessary without deception as to their context and thus respects your freedom of judgement, whatever conclusion it reaches and whether or not the author has the intention of serving a cause, it is clear that this is information and not propaganda' (Chevassu, op cit, p 17).

Here, the subject is not faced by 'ideology' – the mark of propaganda – but by *ideas*. The spectator is autonomous, fully rational, able to weigh arguments and to compare and judge them.

On the one hand, then, a behaviourist subject (Furkhammar and Isaksson speak of 'patterns of conditioning reflexes'), on the other a transcendental subject, one the product of propaganda, the other the product of various forms of realism. This contradiction is sometimes displaced in a conception of the subject as constituted in a basic duality as between 'intellect' and 'reason'.

12 on the one hand and 'emotion' and 'instinct' on the other. Propaganda cultivates the latter:

'... propaganda guards against any ambivalent reactions by seeking out the most fundamental human responses, the most basic value judgements, the most elementary emotions' (Furkhammar and Isaksson, *op cit* p 154).

Emotion, indeed, is the very sign of that force which pervades propaganda:

'It is of course the emotions, not the intellect, to which propaganda is addressed. Confident that people in an excited state are receptive to influences which would otherwise be subject to scrutiny, the propagandist does all he can to stir up the emotions, the more easily to guide them towards his political goal' (*ibid*, p 154).

Realism on the other hand encourages thought, the intellect: it 'respects your freedom of judgement'. This dualism, however, does not resolve the contradiction. It merely shifts it elsewhere, since what are posited, in fact, are two modes of subjectivity, the one (behaviourist) the other (transcendental), existing within the same subject. Moreover, a passive, malleable subject is implied in each case, since these twin alternatives are seen solely as the outcome of intentions – the intentions of the propagandist on the one hand and the intentions of the 'realist' on the other (intentions which are viewed as fundamentally educative): either that passive malleable subject is confirmed (propaganda) or turned into something else.

These intentions are the property of the addressor, a further instance of subjectivity involved. Here, though, the subject is neither behaviourist, nor transcendental, but empirical: simply an historically or sociologically verifiable individual or group, always already constituted as in possession of a given politics and/or a given ideology. These latter form the basis of the addressor's intentions, which in turn achieve (transparent) representation in propagandist discourse, to be read off by the final instance of subjectivity involved: the subject of the liberal humanist meta-discourse which constitutes propaganda in the manner outlined here.

This subject remains unspoken and unspeakable. It remains unspoken and unspeakable since to articulate it, to subject it to conceptualisation, would involve foregrounding the most fundamental contradiction of all: that between the addressee it speaks of (passive, malleable, given as ineluctably acceding to the propagandist's intentions) and the addressee it itself necessarily is, fully rational, fully autonomous, fully capable of thought, judgement and evaluation – fully transcendental.

Each of these contradictions and inconsistencies stems from

this: that subjectivity as a process in construction remains unthought and unthinkable, and, its corollary, that the material nature and effectivity of discourse is denied. An effect, here, is the result of intentions: point of view is not a discursive structure but the sign of these intentions, their mode of operation in a mechanism of imposition.

This is not only because of the strand of the problematic in respect of subjectivity itself, but also because of the liberal humanist conception of ideology and politics. Subjectivity enters the realm of these latter from elsewhere. The crossing of all three in the particular instance of propaganda thus necessitates a process of conceptual re-separation, which takes place through a differential conception of addressee on the one hand, and addressor on the other: the addressee is conceived purely 'psychologically' (instincts, emotion, reason, intellect); the 'social' elements of subjectivity (notably ideology and politics) are displaced onto the addressor as a set of given intentions and as a given point of view. The effect of ideology and politics is that point of view becomes doctrine, and its effectivity, indoctrination. Crucially, a definition of propaganda in terms of its production of a behaviourist subject allows an evaluation of it that is non-political and non-ideological: propaganda is adjudged from the standpoint of the addressee, and the addressee, as indicated above, is conceived purely psychologically. Propaganda is condemned from the standpoint of a liberal humanist conception of a free, rational and autonomous subjectivity. But this conception, again as pointed to above, cannot be scrutinised, and this allows the ideological nature of liberal humanism itself to be disavowed: all ideologies are ideological except liberal humanism. This in turn provides the basis for a seemingly non-ideological dismissal of partisan art, and, at the same time, where ideology becomes linked to politics, diverse political ideologies such as communism and fascism can be dismissed on the grounds that they produce propaganda: the only non-propagandist space left is that of liberal or social democracy: 'propaganda has followed Eisenstein's road and not Bazin's. It cannot afford to be democratic'.

Neither politics nor ideology (nor, for that matter, subjectivity and art) are placed within the 'social' in a theoretical way: they are simply there as the products of 'history' or 'society' conceived as an aggregate of empirically observable 'events'. This, coupled with the stress on intentions, results in a constant uncertainty when dealing with ideology and politics in relation to what it conceives as non-propagandist art, especially in socialist or fascist countries, whose ideologies should, as seen above, guarantee propaganda. Books or articles on Nazi cinema, for example, constantly hover between conceiving entertainment films as non-ideological and escapist and therefore performing an ideological function in not confronting 'reality', or else as embody-

14 ing Nazi ideology in a 'hidden' way through particular modes of characterisation or the portrayal of validated narrative actions. The latter are differentiated from propaganda because they are somehow not 'overt' or were not produced at Goebbels's behest. However, if they are not 'overt' it is still assumed that they can be read in the covertly inscribed manner, that for instance, the figure of Frederick the Great in the many entertainment films centred on this reign will be read as analogous to Hitler, that this will always be so, and this because of an intentionality that remains, in essence, in the film, rather than because the nature of the specific conjuncture in which the films were first made and viewed forces that reading.

More generally, it is impossible to account, theoretically, for the effects of entertainment films at the political level within specific conjunctures. Thus *Politics and Film* is full of examples of entertainment films having such effects, but they can only be empirically noted: there is no conceptual apparatus – no theory – with which to handle them. Within a problematic of intentionality and manipulation, the concepts needed are necessarily absent, not least because they would entail entirely different concepts of subjectivity, ideology and politics.

The final strand crossing and constituting propaganda is a particular ideology of art, that of realism. Realism forms the ground on which notions of propaganda – and hostility towards it – are elaborated. Here, it is constituted both by the aesthetic properties of the realist text, and by the critical ideology that constructs a particular conceptualisation of it.

The realist text can concern itself both with ideology and with politics, but only in particular ways, ways which are limited by its particular structure. This is one in which a set of discourses are placed in relation one to another and in which one discourse is dominant but 'invisible'; in which a set of viewpoints, linked predominantly to particularised and individual characters, are relativised and hierarchised in relation to one another through their relationship to a homogeneous discourse of narration – usually offered not as a discourse or viewpoint among others but as the limit to discourse, as the ground within which discourse takes place and can hence be identified, measured and evaluated (see Colin MacCabe: 'Realism and cinema: notes on some Brechtian theses', *Screen* v 15 n 2, Summer 1974). The 'realism' produced by these mechanisms is one in which 'the real' is produced as the sum total of intra-diegetic points of view plus the 'invisible' point of view provided by the discourse of narration.

Yuri Lotman makes this point in relation to Pushkin's *Tales of Belkin*, within the general context of a consideration of various generic systems of point of view:

'Every tale is so constructed that each of these points of view is

variously emphasised in different parts of the text. Various points of view may come into play even within a single sentence, which produces both the accentuation of the specific character of the sentient centers and the objective "metaposition" – the construct of reality' (Yuri Lotman, 'Point of View in a Text', *New Literary History*, v 6 n 2, Winter 1975, p 352).

Within this system, an ideological or political position can only be offered as the viewpoint of a character (or set of characters – though here the system tends to break down since it depends upon individualisation) within the diegesis. The narrative discourse has no viewpoint, no position, is invisible. The system will allow a certain degree of authorial intervention but only in a generalising manner and only in a necessarily authoritarian way: a way which disavows (conjunctural) specificity or social contradiction and which has been frequently viewed as a sign of imperfection within the critical ideologies that have been based upon and that have acted to support realist artistic practices.

Within the parameters of this system, and within the parameters of the critical ideologies that act to support it, reality is constructed as something given, unchangeable and homogeneous, but also potentially infinite, given its empirically detailed surface and its reciprocal interrelationships within a diversity of individual points of view. It links quite clearly with a hostility to what is conceived as propaganda on the grounds of the latter's 'bias', 'one-sidedness' and so on: the real is an infinite totality; any one position or 'point of view' is inadequate to it and therefore precludes full commitment. If propaganda is conceived purely as a single mode of addressor-addressee relationship, it can be juxtaposed, regardless of the political or ideological position of particular works instanced as examples, against the realist text with its complexity of point of view and its apparent appeal to a spectator who freely makes up his or her own mind such that directly and specifically 'political' or 'ideological' criteria of evaluation are irrelevant:

'Let us juxtapose, for a moment, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Triumph of the Will* and *Vent d'Est*: three films quite distinct from each other in period, cultural background, political ideology and style. They have one thing in common: none of them permits the spectator, within the work, an alternative view to the one promulgated by the film-maker. Eisenstein (for better or worse – the point is arguable) does not allow us to think, "The ship's officers are human beings too"; Riefenstahl does not let us think, "Hitler may be a real bastard". The case of *Vent d'Est* is slightly more complicated. . . . But, while his film expresses some uncertainty as to the most effective methods for revolutionaries (or revolutionary film-makers) to adopt, Godard nowhere allows us to question the desirability of revolution.

16 'Against these films set Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers*. . . . The main inclination of the film's sympathies is abundantly clear. Yet Pontecorvo is able to present the commander of the paratroopers as an intelligent human being capable of presenting a rational defence of his position; the film's argument allows that, while that position is regarded as "wrong", it has something to be said for it, it can be rationally defended' (Robin Wood, *Personal Views*, Gordon Fraser, 1976, pp 44-45).

Similarly, in a way that is very familiar within the tradition of film criticism, Furkhammar and Isaksson contrast Soviet montage cinema with realism:

'[With montage] the illusory reality on the screen was not tied to reality itself, but could be constructed on the cutting table by the director using carefully chosen fragments brought together to make a combined assault on the sensibilities of the audience that would achieve the required psychological effect' (op cit p 12)

whereas with Socialist Realism and, in particular, a film like *Chapayev*:

'both characters and events were allowed to retain their moral ambivalence: the representation of political acts did not become crudely propagandist' (ibid, p 21).

An ideology of the liberal humanist subject and a particular epistemological position on reality are interlinked here with the realist text over and against propaganda, bias and psychological terrorism. The realist text constructs a position of homogeneous and transcendental unity on the part of both subject and object via the mechanisms of the metadiscourse: the real is produced as given – outside the articulation that produces it, simply as what the text reflects or, in a more sophisticated version, what the text reflects in a manner filtered by the subjectivity of the author. The real as textually produced is offered not as that product, but as a non-articulated given against which what *are* marked as discourses are read. This position is reduplicated by critical discourses that take the realist text as their aesthetic standard. As is evident in the quotations cited above, the real and its complexities are taken not as objects of discourse (of the critical discourse in which, as concepts, they are articulated) but as outside discourse: something there which discourse can simply refer to and reflect. Reality as such is potentially available for reflection within either critical or artistic discourse. If it is not so reflected in its full complexity and ambivalence (categories which are given as if they are given properties of the real as such rather than as concepts elaborated within discourse), this is because of certain narrow, single-minded, politically fanatical, propagandist intentions.

The particular nature of realism, and the particular place it

occupies within liberal humanist discourse on propaganda – 17 especially as these relate to the conceptualisation of the addressor, and the relationship of the addressor to 'society', ideology and politics – allows a non-interrogation of the place of realist texts within 'society'. While there may be an acknowledgement of 'social context', such a context is conceived purely empirically, and is constantly externalised: there is no conception of either art or artist as necessarily caught within specific social relations within specific conjunctures; of either as having specific conditions of existence in terms of apparatuses and institutions; of ideological or political (or economic) factors as having any necessary effectivity within aesthetics (of 'aesthetics' as an integral element of the instance of ideology); nor of art and the artist, in turn, having a necessary effectivity within regard to ideology, politics and economics.

1. This conception of art, together with its concomitant conception of propaganda and together with the (realist) artistic practices that reinforce it may be linked to a number of historical factors, primary among them being the development of capitalist social relations and their transformation both of artistic practices and of the conception and validation of those practices in theory and criticism. Competitive production for an anonymous market formed the basis for systems of address, for the conception of the social role of art and for the conception of the artist that were historically new, distinct from those prevailing under different systems of patronage, where the ideological and political role of art was often freely acknowledged and cultivated. It is thus interesting that the ideological role of art during the Middle Ages was completely accepted and that the very concept of propaganda ('propagating the faith') arose when the hegemony of the Catholic Church as patron was challenged, when other ideologies of art arose with the beginnings of an art market, and thus when art which served a specific ideological purpose needed to be marked off and labelled as such. With regard to realism, with its system of impersonal address and with its very construction of a model of 'reality' in which 'ideology' and 'politics' have a very particular and often limited place, its growth in the nineteenth century especially coincides with its complete commercialisation. Its appeal to a universality (of audience, of truth, of human nature, of the real) is a corollary of both the anonymity of the market and its mass nature. Critical ideologies can precisely validate realist art in terms of such a universality and can thus view partisan art with abhorrence, as not conforming to the production of that universality, as propaganda. *

What has emerged from the above discussion is, firstly, that an ideology – here what might be called the liberal humanist ideology of propaganda – is never just a single, self-contained discourse or unit of themes, but is rather the product of other ideologies and

- 18 discourses converging around and constituting those themes; secondly that that process of convergence and constitution constantly produces contradictions, especially at points where relatively self-consistent ideologies and discourses cross each other; and thirdly, and overall, that propaganda needs to be re-thought and that that re-thinking requires a different conceptualisation of the three component areas of the liberal humanist problematic, and a different articulation of their interrelationship, in the light of a number of the critical points made so far.

IDEOLOGY AND IDEOLOGIES

I should like to proceed initially by attempting to clarify the concept of ideology, and the distinction between ideology and ideologies, since, as has been indicated, the term 'ideology' is central to liberal humanist definitions of propaganda, definitions in which ideology, ideologies and propaganda tend to be collapsed into each other. Ideology, as a general concept, can be understood as comprising, on the one hand, the field of representations in discourse, a field which crosses the social formation and its practices as a whole: every practice always and necessarily involves a discursive moment; on the other hand, along with the economic and the political, ideology – the ideological – is a particular instance within a social formation, an instance comprising practices whose specific product and terrain of intervention is discursive representation and the apparatuses and institutions that specifically provide supports for these practices. To speak of representation in discourse in relation to ideology is also to speak of subject positions: each discursive representation constitutes a subject position, a place for the production and configuration of meaning, for its coherence, or, occasionally, for its critical rupture. Each discursive utterance, that is to say, has a specific system of address. The subject referred to here is neither transcendental nor behaviourist. Rather it is psychoanalytic: a heterogeneous subjectivity in a constant process of (re)constitution through discourse and meaning. The modality of that process at any one point is dependent upon the modality of address realised in any specific discursive enunciation. Thus propaganda, if, at one level, it is to be conceived as a mode or set of related modes of address, cannot simply be collapsed into ideology. Neither can it be collapsed into specific ideologies. Ideologies are systems of discursive representation. However, they are not necessarily marked by a single specific mode of address, not least because such representations are produced within different signifying media (eg writing, speech, film, painting) and within and occasionally, critically, across different orders of discourse (eg essays, pamphlets, speeches, slogans, documentaries, narrative fiction, and so on). What marks the unity of an ideology is its problematic, the

field and range of its representational possibilities (a field and range governed by the conjuncture), rather than any specific system of address. A similar point is made by Nicos Poulantzas in a paper on fascism which specifically highlights the various modalities of fascist ideology: 19

'... the *function of class* in relation to that of ideology must be specified. The conception of one unified and uniform fascist language or discourse, addressed indiscriminately to the masses must be abandoned. Thus, as Togliatti correctly pointed out at the time, there is nothing more false than to consider fascist ideology as a unitary and single "system": "Fascist ideology contains a series of heterogeneous elements. . . . I want to forewarn you against the tendency to consider fascist ideology as something fully constituted, complete, homogeneous. . . ." In fact, it is in no sense a question of the repetition of an identical discourse, conveyed by the techniques of propaganda to atomised and undifferentiated masses. . . . On the contrary, its role vis-à-vis the popular masses must have been that these ideologies and discourses *presented themselves in a considerably different way, such that they manifest themselves in the diverse politico-ideological fascist apparatuses, according to the diverse classes, fractions and social categories to which they are addressed*, that which permitted them precisely to exploit the material conditions of existence of these classes and fractions. Fascist discourse in fact differs considerably according to whether it is addressed to the working class and manifests itself in the apparatuses which are specifically destined for it (the fascist unions), to the popular classes in the countryside or to the petty bourgeoisie (the fascist party). Nothing is clearer than that the functioning of a single theme, that of *corporatism*, under the guise of pure and simple repetition, in fact reveals a considerably different meaning according to whether it is addressed to the working class, to the poor peasantry or to the petty bourgeoisie' ('A Propos de l'impact populaire du Fascisme', in Macciocchi (ed), *Éléments pour une analyse du Fascisme*, vol 1, Paris 1976, pp 100-101).

However, while Poulantzas is careful to differentiate as between different instances of fascist ideology and while he relates this to a categorisation of audiences, so that the differentiation is conceived of in terms of address, he does so in such a way that those audiences, and their categorisation, are determined solely at the levels of the economic and the political. Address is thus less an effective property of discourse than a mode of insertion of discourse into a context whose determinations lie elsewhere. The role of ideology, therefore, is reduced to that of reflecting a pre-existing situation, of reflecting pre-existing struggles and social differentiations, rather than that of an active structuring agent

20 within them. If ideology is to be given an effectivity, address has to be conceived in such a way that the positions produced by different modes of address are active in constituting audiences ideologically, and that that constitution, in relation to other discourses and modes of address, and in relation to economic and political practices, has a material effect in the production and modification of the conjuncture: audiences are determined economically, politically *and ideologically*.

A fuller specification and illustration of this will emerge during the rest of this article. More immediately, it is worth elaborating the point concerning ideologies, address and propaganda through an examination of the inscription of the ideology of Populism within a group of films made in Hollywood in the 1930s. From there, it will be possible to turn to a specification of propaganda in relation both to these Hollywood films, and to two films made during the Nazi régime in Germany.

POPULISM

A number of films made in Hollywood in the 1930s have been categorised as Populist, in particular those directed by Frank Capra, Leo McCarey and John Ford (see Jeffrey Richards, *Visions of Yesterday*). The examples I want to concentrate on are *Ruggles of Red Gap* (with reference to *The Prisoner of Shark Island* and *Young Mr Lincoln*), *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. In what ways can these films be said to relate to the ideology of Populism? If they can be labelled Populist, can they be considered as instances of Populist propaganda? In answering these questions, what will have to be specified is not only the shared problematic of representational position offered by these films and how that relates to Populism, but also how the inscription of a Populist position is realised within the system of address of the classical realist text, a process which will begin to form the ground for the specification of the system(s) of address in propaganda via its differentiation from that of the classical text.

The classical realist text is marked by the modality of the process of the subject in its meanings, one which constantly produces coherence in and for the subject through the workings of its system of narration in relation to the heterogeneity of meaningful effects that that system orders. As Stephen Heath has noted ('Film and System', *Screen* v 16 n 1, Spring 1975, pp 48-50), narrative is always a process of transformation of elements that constitute its pretext, the interruption of an initial homogeneity and the tracing of the dispersal and re-figuration of its components. The system of narration in the classical realist text is one which orders that dispersal and re-figuration in a particular way, such that dispersal is contained in figures of symmetry and

balance, its elements re-placed in a new homogeneity whose achievement is the condition of narrative closure. This process is that of the subject, so that: 21

the drama – the logic and economy of film and novel – is to maintain a violence, a heterogeneity, from the position of the subject; the position of realism is the position of intelligibility and the guarantee of intelligibility is the stability of the subject, thus narrative, dispersion and convergence, becomes the fiction of reality, the form of realism, the separation in position of subject and process . . . ' (ibid, p 49).

This 'logic and economy' is the ideological operation of the classical realist text, where 'ideological' is understood in its general sense. The location of particular ideologies within particular texts takes place through consideration of the specific signifying elements bound in the initial equilibrium, dispersed through its interruption and re-bound at its closure; through consideration, therefore, of the particular figures of 'dispersion and convergence' involved and the position produced as the place of their coherence.

In *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*, *Mr Smith Goes to Washington* and *Ruggles of Red Gap*, the initial equilibrium is a markedly 'social' and contemporary one: what is signified is a particular state of affairs vis-à-vis specific social orders and institutions. Thus *Ruggles of Red Gap* opens with a sequence of dialogue between an English aristocrat and his butler (Ruggles) in a Paris hotel room. It is revealed through the dialogue that Ruggles has been 'won' in a card game by an American millionaire. This is the 'violence', the disruption of order that upsets an equilibrium that is thus largely established retrospectively. One set of the terms of that equilibrium is signified in this sequence: 'European' wealth and social order, based on hereditary privilege and entailing a rigid stratification and hierarchisation of class and status. The other is given in the next sequence, a dialogue scene between the American millionaire and his wife in which we learn that his wealth comes from recently discovered oil on his small farm in Red Gap (a small Midwestern town) and that he is (literally, physically) uncomfortable with the 'European' order that wealth entails but that his wife is so keen to foster: it is she who has instigated the acquisition of Ruggles. In a sense the 'violence' is a double one: the transferral of Ruggles to the service of the Americans, but a transferral itself based on the disruption of the Americans' life through the acquisition of wealth. Ruggles thus becomes the focus for the working out of a double but interrelated process: the re-placement of his social position and the concomitant re-ordering of the elements disrupted by the acquisition of wealth, both mapped across a set of key elements initially in opposition (Europe v America, urban civilisation v small rural township, class stratification v interpersonal community). It is the final and stable transformation of

22 Ruggles's status and position that the narrative works to achieve; it is the threats to that that constitute the prime focus of the narrative suspense; and it is the dislocations and disruptions in social order that the process of transformation entails that provide the basis for the film's comedy. Ruggles is the prime figure of and for the coalescence of the new equilibrium. Its elements are similar to those at the beginning but augmented and re-ordered, literally re-placed (the setting is now no longer a Paris hotel, but Ruggles's newly opened restaurant in Red Gap). The new order is thus, again, an explicitly 'social' one. It is one in which the hierarchy of the European class system is abolished, together with its system of marks of social rank, to be replaced by a community of individuals (individuality being signified in the film as a set of distinct and eccentric traits of dress, behaviour and speech) whose interrelations are 'personal' rather than 'social' (ie determined by the factors in the film that mark the social order, wealth, rank and class) and who are free to pursue their own individual entrepreneurial activities if they so wish (though entrepreneurial activities of a distinct petty bourgeois kind).

Any film is in interrelationship with a whole set of discourses at any particular time. It is the particularity of the nature and constellation of the significant elements set in process through the narrative, and the particularity of the order of their solution, that enables a film like *Ruggles of Red Gap* to enter into relation with a specific set of the discourses around it in the conjuncture, discourses that may be categorised, or that categorise themselves, as Populist. It is through an analysis of these kinds of interrelation that a film's relationship to its audience may begin to be specified. For instance, one very specific mark of the Populism of *Ruggles of Red Gap* is its use of Lincoln's Gettysberg address. It occurs at a pivotal moment in the narrative and, structurally, serves as the cause for Ruggles's initial decision to leave service and set himself up as a restaurant owner. The sequence is set up in a bar, and Lincoln's address is mentioned. No-one else remembers it, but Ruggles proceeds to recite it complete. As is common in Hollywood films, the address is diegetically motivated and directed, but the speech is also given to the audience. (It is the nearest Hollywood films usually get to direct address.) Ruggles remembers the speech for the characters in the film and for the audience of the film. The self-determination of his identity coincides with the recital of the speech and, for the audience, provides the discourse whose terms provide the measure of the solution of the narrative, and therefore the crucial position of distance and dominance vis-à-vis that narrative, as well as acting as a semi-direct ideological address to it. The point is that Lincoln's address assumes a very strong and significant place within the tradition of American Populist ideology, and that during the conjuncture of the film's first viewing, Populist ideology was itself a very strong force in

America. Thus, for a contemporary American audience, its use in *Ruggles*, and that moment of semi-direct address, would have an augmented and clearly marked significance. 23

Mr Smith Goes to Washington and *Mr Deeds Goes to Town* share a number of characteristics with *Ruggles of Red Gap*. Again the initial equilibrium is markedly 'social' (in *Mr Smith* it concerns political institutions, centred on the Senate; in *Mr Deeds* it concerns wealth, particularly in relation to financial and legal institutions). That equilibrium, centred in the city, is marked as both corrupt, 'unjust' and yet normative within its milieu. It is upset, in each case by death, and in each case what is sought is a character to fulfil the function of the dead character and thus restore the initial equilibrium. The new character comes from outside, from the rural Midwest, and operates narratively to re-order the initial elements such that the final equilibrium is different, and focus that re-ordering as ethically necessary. As in *Ruggles of Red Gap*, a set of key elements are posed as in opposition – city v country, 'civilised' v 'natural' behaviour, impersonal, hierarchical and unjust social order v one based on personal relations that serve to dissolve restrictions on individual initiative and worth – and the new equilibrium is based on identifiably Populist principles. Moreover, again as in *Ruggles*, a key and pivotal moment in the narrative process is centred on the discourse and image of figures important within the Populist tradition for providing its ideological basis, Lincoln in *Mr Deeds* (again the Gettysberg address is highlighted) and Grant in *Mr Smith*. These figures and their words provide the terms necessary, structurally, within the narrative, for the establishment of the final equilibrium, and thus the terms for the understanding and evaluation of that equilibrium on the part of the audience. It is in their name and on the basis of their principles that the equilibrium is attained.

What these examples illustrate is the way in which a specific ideology finds its place within the system of the classical text. That illustration is, in many ways, banal, since it takes meaning as constructed and read, and since, therefore, it largely takes the *work* of the classical text, the pressures and costs of its system, as given. There is no space here for a detailed examination of that work and the contradictions it involves. Nevertheless it is worth pointing, briefly, to the way in which the work of the classical text, as related to the work of the inscription of an ideological system, can highlight the contradictions it seeks to work over. The prime example of this, in relation to Populist ideology, is *Young Mr Lincoln*. Many of the contradictions pointed to in the *Cahiers* analysis of the film (see *Screen* v 13 n 3, Autumn 1972) can be read as deriving from the contradictions within Populist ideology, and this especially as concerns the place and workings of the Law. One of the tenets of Populism is that government is too distant from 'the people'; that it should as directly as possible

24 express the people's wishes but that it has ceased to do so (the distance it posits as characterising contemporary government being a result of a change in American society from a basis in petty bourgeois rural economy to one based in large urban enterprises with their cartels and their monopolies). This led to an interest in plebiscitary democracy in certain Populist currents. This is often inscribed into the films in trial scenes, or scenes diegetically located in apparatuses of power (eg the Senate in *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*) at a crucial point in the narrative. The 'success' or 'failure' of their outcome vis-à-vis the establishment of a 'just' narrative equilibrium is measured in terms of the assent and approval of 'the people' as represented within the films. In *Young Mr Lincoln*, one of the contradictions is focussed around the fact that *direct* action by the people conflicts with the Law (as in the lynching scene): the 'people' becomes a mob. Lincoln, in incarnating the Law, is both of the 'people' and *above* them. This in turn involves a contradiction more centrally highlighted in the *Cahiers* analysis. Lincoln's discourse is or should be the basis of the Law (cf the remarks above concerning the Gettysberg address), yet at the same time he is only its instrument; his words are only part of a tradition of Populist discourse whose other elements include the Constitution and Blackstone, but also the kind of rural folk wisdom enshrined in the almanac. Moreover, as incarnation of the Law, Lincoln is necessarily an authority over 'the people'. Hence his status within the film as both friend and 'monster'.

Similar contradictions – notably as regards the status of the will of the people – can be found in *The Prisoner of Shark Island*, a film that works very importantly in relation to Populism through its concern with the assassination of Lincoln and its consequences vis-à-vis the rural South. A doctor is falsely accused and found guilty of involvement in the assassination conspiracy. All those accused are not tried publicly, but by closed military court. The falsity and injustice of the verdict may thus be read as in correlation with the absence of the people, and their judgement, via the normal mechanism of a jury. However, it is established in the film that the reason for trying the accused by military tribunal is that the people are liable to lynch the accused without any trial at all.

The role of the Law within Populist ideology in general is subject to these contradictions, which generally only become manageable in quite overtly 'fictionalised' narratives and in quite overtly 'fantastic' ways: think of the endings of *Mr Smith Goes to Washington* and *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*. *The Prisoner of Shark Island* also achieves its dénouement in an extraordinary way: the doctor is released from his island prison after single-handedly saving its population from yellow fever during a storm which directly echoes that which followed Lincoln's death. Moreover, he does so after bombarding a US Government ship carrying medical

supplies. As soon as the storm is over, as soon as the fever has passed, he is 'miraculously' thanked by the Union officer in the prison who had despised him the most. *Young Mr Lincoln* is exceptional in not being able to handle the contradictions it sets up. Those contradictions, I would argue, have as much to do with Populism as with John Ford. Moreover, their placing in this way allows a different conception of the film's ideological 'project' than the unsatisfactory over-politicised (and over-intentionalised) one given in the *Cahiers* analysis. 25

PROPAGANDA AND TEXT

The above analysis has illustrated how a Populist position is inscribed within a text. What I now want to do is to describe the point at which ideological inscription becomes propagandist. There are two main issues for consideration here: that of textual systems and modes of address (particularly in relation to classical realism), and that of the place of texts within the apparatuses involved in their production, distribution and consumption, and within the conjuncture as a whole. Rather than attempting to provide an abstract examination of these issues I wish to proceed by investigating two films made in Nazi Germany, *Jud Süß* and *Der ewige Jude*, both released in the same year (1940) and each closely related to the other in that they produce a specific ideological position – anti-Semitism – within the overall problematic of Nazi ideology. What I want to demonstrate is that, although the two films are closely related in producing an anti-semitic position, they do so in different ways and that their differences can be located in terms of the fact that, from the point of view of their modes of address, one – *Der ewige Jude* – is propaganda, whereas the other – *Jud Süß* – is not. However, what I also want to demonstrate is that, none the less, both films served a propagandist function through the way in which they were placed within the apparatuses involved in their consumption at various points and that this in turn relates on the one hand to the organisation of ideological apparatuses within the fascist state in Germany and on the other to the conjuncture. What the analysis should serve to do therefore, is to begin to identify the specificity of propaganda. From here it will be possible to return to the issue of Populism, the classical text and Hollywood.

Jud Süß is a classical realist text, with the general characteristics and mode of address described above in relation to Hollywood Populism in the thirties. The anti-semitic component of Nazi ideology is inscribed within that text in a similar manner to the inscription of Populism within Hollywood texts: an anti-semitic position is produced as the place of the coherence of meaning. The narrative equilibrium – the initial homogeneity of meaning – is based upon a set of demarcations as the mark of its order,

26 demarcations as between Germans and Jews which operate so as to 'place' them. Thus the Jews have a designated place in the ghetto outside the gates of Württemberg. This aspect of the equilibrium is disrupted by the initial crossing of that 'border' by Süß Oppenheimer, a rich Jew, a disruption made possible by a prior 'disorder' in Württemberg itself: its ruler, Duke Karl Alexander, is obsessed with women, has squandered money on his debauchery and needs more in order to continue his sexual activities. The Duke approaches Süß for financial assistance and Süß thus finds his way into Court, eventually achieving a position of great power and influence. Homogeneity, equilibrium and order therefore cross three privileged instances: 'social' place, wealth and sexuality, each centred on race (the climactic mark of sexual disorder in the film is the rape, by Süß, of a Councillor's daughter, newly married to the blonde 'Aryan' hero). The narrative process traces the consequences of the disruption of that order and its eventual restoration, a restoration consequent upon the death of the Duke, Süß and the daughter, and marked by the banishment of Jews from Württemberg. (The daughter has a crucial and interesting role in the narrative: when Süß is first on his way to the town, his carriage overturns; she comes to help him, and takes him in her carriage. He later rapes her, and she commits suicide. Her place within the narrative disorder and her 'responsibility' for its generation means that she has to die, to disappear from the narrative, in order that an equilibrium be finally re-established.)

The 'panic' caused by the initial disruption is addressed to the spectator in terms of images of the body. Each of the instances pointed to above finds its focus in terms of race, and each in turn is displaced onto and condensed into representations of the body. The condition of order in the film is that racial difference is inscribed and readable, immediately intelligible, and the condition of that is that racial traits are visible on the body. These two sets of elements (difference and inscription, race and body) are brought together and related across two lap dissolves early in the film. The first of these is a dissolve from the Württemberg emblem on the palace balcony to a Jewish sign in the ghetto: difference given in terms of the inscription of visible marks on a surface. (These marks, as marks, are all the more prominent in the instance of the Jewish sign – Hebrew script, presumably illegible and unintelligible to a non-Jewish audience, becomes purely a set of strange and meaningless marks.) The second links a close-up of Süß in his house in the ghetto, to a close-up of him in his carriage on the road to the palace. In the first of these close-ups, Süß's 'Jewish' features are accentuated by his dress, beard and hair-style. In the second, however, his features are 'concealed': he is clean-shaven, his hair is tied back in 'civilised' Court fashion and he wears elegant court clothes. Hence the bodily marks of racial difference as between Jews and 'Aryans' are here effaced

as Süss drives to court, the narrative intrigue firmly under way, 27
its equilibrium disrupted, the terms of its order dispersed. Order
is finally re-established with the trial and hanging of Süss. Here
the latter dissolve mentioned above finds its echo in a dissolve
from a close-up of Süss, arrested at a party, his appearance still
courtly and 'Aryan', to a close-up of him at his trial, his 'Jewish'
features – hairstyle, beard and dress – returned: order is re-
established through a final inscription of the legible marks of
racial difference. Two earlier sequences are particularly interesting
in relation to this. The rape scene intercuts Süss and the heroine
in his bedroom, with the hero being tortured by Süss's henchmen
in a cellar on the other side of the street. (The torture is calculated
to force the heroine to give in to Süss: either she consents, or the
hero is mutilated.) Sexuality and race, the possibility of their
mutual disorder, are here given as a metonymic conjunction of the
threat of bodily disfigurement with the threat of miscegenation.

In an earlier sequence, there is a remarkable image of the terms
of the heterogeneity that the narrative must order. Accompanied
by his negro servant Süss takes the Duke to see Rabbi Leow in
order to be told his fortune, a trick which definitively established
Süss's power over the Duke. This disorder is imaged in a long shot
as a racial heterogeneity whose centre – whose cause – is non-
inscribed racial difference. Rabbi Leow wears the traditional
garments of a Rabbi, and has evidently 'Jewish' features, hair
and beard; the Duke has 'Aryan' features and dress, dress that
also serves to mark his social rank and status (though he is also
ugly and fat – the disorder that is centred on his sexual appetite
and which inaugurates Süss's rise to power is marked on his body
and reinforced by the contrast between his appearance and that of
the other 'Aryan' characters in the film). To the right of the frame
is the negro servant boy (racial difference doubly ordered through
bodily markings and through a visible and 'appropriate' social
rank). In its centre is Süss: disorder is the non-segregation of the
races whose cause and centre is the non-marking of racial difference
on the body.

Thus, in *Jud Süss*, anti-semitism is inscribed as the specificity
of meaning produced within the mechanisms of the classical text.
The 'drama' of the classical text as described by Heath above
is articulated in specific terms: the production, maintenance and
ultimate containment of heterogeneity that marks the classical
text is here mapped in terms of signifiers of race whose over-
determined focus is the body; the production of a final position
of intelligibility, of an order for the subject guaranteed through
the production of a final narrative equilibrium – the containment
of heterogeneity through the re-placement of its elements as
homogeneous – is here a position whose pre-condition is racial
order and segregation, and whose character can thus be described
as racist, anti-semitic.

28 *Der ewige Jude* shares a number of interesting and significant features with *Jud Süß*, particularly as regards representations of the body. Two sequences are of particular importance here. One consists of a set of images of Jewish faces, in which there is a dissolve from each individual face as marked by 'Jewish' characteristics in terms of hairstyle and beard to the same face, shorn of these marks, a sequence culminating in shots of Jewish businessmen in German high society accompanied by the following commentary: '... even these "civilised" Jews remain foreign bodies in the organism of their hosts, no matter how much their outward appearance may correspond to their hosts.'¹ The other is a long sequence on art and culture whose introduction consists of a montage of Classical and Renaissance images of the human figure, followed by a montage of images of the human figure from Modern Art (predominantly Expressionist), whose effect is the juxtaposition of 'ideal' and 'harmonious' (homogeneous) images of the body with images in which the body is 'disfigured' and 'distorted', these latter associated through the commentary with the predominance of Jews in German cultural life during the Weimar Republic, again, as above, with verbal imagery of disease, organic disorder, the disruption of the body and its organic and social regulation: 'A wave of vulgarisation and bastardisation swept through all fields of German cultural life'; 'The Jew is interested instinctively in everything abnormal and depraved. Here he noses out ways of disrupting the healthy judgement of a race.' As with *Jud Süß*, the premiss of the film is that there is disorder, that this disorder is caused by the Jewish race, that it manifests itself and is thought in terms of the human body, and that its cause lies in the fact that racial difference and its bodily markings on the body can be erased and therefore go unrecognised. This premiss is given in the film's opening titles:

'The civilised Jews such as those we know in Germany provide an incomplete picture of their racial characteristics. This film shows original material shot in the Polish ghettos, shows us the Jews as they really looked before they concealed themselves behind the mask of civilised Europeans.'

It gives the film's process its structure and the goal of its order, as it constantly reiterates the effects of disorder in terms of bodily disruption and disease (the famous sequence, for instance, in which the Jewish race is compared to rats); constantly seeks to find that disorder – hence to re-mark racial difference – in terms of an origin (ultimately given as the Middle East, the home of the Jews, the origin of their race, where bodily difference is most heavily marked; it is from here that the Jews 'spread' over the

1. All quotations from the commentary of *Der ewige Jude* are taken from the transcript in the Imperial War Museum, London.

world, and it is here that the Jew-rat comparison comes in; but 29
most important, that process of 'spreading' is accompanied by
the erasure of the marking of difference: hence the constant neces-
sity to return to that origin, to re-find that difference, hence to
re-find the terms of an order); and finally finds a 'solution' to the
problem in the penultimate sequence, in which Hitler is shown
addressing an assembly at the Knoll Opera House in 1939. The
final paragraph of his speech reads as follows:

'The eternal law of nature, to keep the races apart, is the legacy
which the National Socialist movement bequests to the German
people in perpetuity. It is in this spirit that the association of
German peoples marches into the future.'

From here order can return: the film concludes with a montage of
young, blonde 'Aryans' giving the Nazi salute, ordered marching
masses and flags and the final words of commentary: 'Keep our
race pure. Racial purity for ever.'

If *Der ewige Jude*, then, can be seen to share with *Jud Süß* a
common problematic in terms of race, order and their representa-
tion, it none the less articulates that problematic in a different
way: it has a different mode of textual address. This is most
evidently related to the fact that, whereas *Jud Süß* is a classical
fictional text, *Der ewige Jude* is a documentary. What this involves
is a different articulation of the subject. Firstly, the metadiscourse
takes the form of a commentary, which serves on the one hand
to unify and verbally mark an order for the images (where the
latter, although they have their own figures of repetition and
symmetry, their own rhythm and balance, are not constrained by
the need to motivate and be motivated by the narration of a plot)
and on the other to allow the possibility of a direct address to an
audience. In *Der ewige Jude*, the images are extremely diverse in
origin and status, from newsreel of the Jewish ghettos in Poland,
to evidently 'staged' sequences (as in the sequence of portraits
of Jews with and without the stereotyped markings of 'Jewish-
ness'), to maps, diagrams and statistics, to paintings and sculp-
tures, to excerpts from a Hollywood fiction film, *The House of
Rothschild*. Their ordering takes place through the structure pointed
to above, a structure whose terms are constantly and heavily stated
in the commentary. The work of the latter in producing that order,
in therefore constantly attempting to contain the potential hetero-
geneity within and across the diversity of visual material, is par-
ticularly evident in the sequence involving extracts from *The House
of Rothschild*, where the commentary not only introduces each
sequence, thus framing it, providing the terms of reference for its
comprehension, but constantly intrudes at various points, thus
insistently re-iterating those terms, re-placing and containing at
potentially critical points. In the second extract, for instance,
Rothschild is talking to his children, telling them of his plan to set

30 up banks in various capital cities. Rothschild speaks:

'If money is to be sent to London, no one needs to risk his life. You send a letter to Nathan in London: To pay so and so. As a contra-account there will be loans from London to Frankfurt. Soon there will be many wars and all the states will come to the Rothschilds. The money will be safest with you.'

The dialogue continues, but the sound is dimmed to inaudibility and the commentary intervenes:

'At this point it must be noted that transfer of money by cheque was not an invention of the Jew, nor was it cultivated by them for the good of mankind, but simply to serve them as a means of obtaining international influence over and above the heads of their hosts.'

The role of the commentary in the film's mode of address is particularly important. Until the end of the film, with Hitler's speech and the final montage, and with the sole exception of the images from Classical and Renaissance painting, a relentless distance is generated and maintained between viewer and image in terms of relations of identification. Hence the strength and predominance of structures of voyeurism/exhibitionism: many sections have Jewish figures parading for the audience; they are there to be examined, inspected, gazed upon. The absence of figures of identification and hence the constant maintenance of psychic distance generates a constant aggression and channels it into the voyeurist/exhibitionist structure, itself maintained in turn by a constant marking of the difference of the figures forming the objects of the spectator's gaze. Hence the crucial role of the body as a figure for the film's concerns. The commentary both helps create and maintain this distance and at the same time fills in and articulates the 'gap' created (which is one reason why it can itself be so 'aggressive'). It does so by binding the spectator into its discourse as the place of its enunciation. Hence the constant use of the first person plural, as for instance in the following quotation:

'We Germans had an opportunity 25 years ago to cast a glance into the Polish ghetto. This time, however, our eyes have been made keener by the experience of the last decade. We no longer see, as in 1914, merely the grotesque and strange elements in these questionable figures of the ghetto – we recognise that here there lies a plague spot that threatens the health of the Aryan people.'

Thus the film speaks *for* the spectator. However it also, at various points, speaks *to* the spectator. The commentary is structured as a set of arguments. It can thus constantly contain potential contradiction by posing questions, recognising a potential plurality of interpretation, in order to 'answer', to place them. Hence the

following occurs over images of Polish Jews desultorily engaged in various menial tasks: 31

'Rarely will you find Jews engaged in useful work. Even then it does not happen willingly. The German Military Government has employed them in salvage work. You can easily see that they aren't used to hard work and don't like it either. But that isn't helplessness, which could be pitied. That is something quite different – these Jews don't want to work. They would far rather be out bartering, when they are in their element.'

The 'you' of direct address occurs at points of argument, at points of potential contradiction, to be rebound into the dominant 'we'. The subject is re-aligned into the homogeneity of a position in a process of suture whose terms in the commentary are, precisely, 'we' and 'you'.

The film's closure offers a final set of images for identification – shots of young 'Aryans' – once its process is complete, its position fully articulated. From there the final exhortation can be made: 'Keep our race pure. Racial purity for ever.' That exhortation aligns the subject as in a position of struggle vis-à-vis certain of the discourses and practices that have been signified within it, and signified in such a way as to mark them as existing outside and beyond it. It is this position that I would maintain as the fundamental mark of a propagandist text.

It is not simply a matter of modes of textual closure, though the kind of final exhortation to be found in *Der ewige Jude* is a significant and typical element, contrasting as it does with the typical form of closure of the classical realist text where there are definite procedures for marking closure as closure, for demarcating a definite space and distance between the text and the discourses and practices around it. It is rather a matter of a continual process of marking the discourses and practices signified within the text as existing outside it, and as existing outside it in conflict, thus of aligning the subject as in identification with one set of discourses and practices and as in opposition to others, of maintaining that identification and opposition, and of not resolving it but rather holding it as the position of closure. Hence the possibility of a final exhortation. Thus the process of engendering distance through the marking of difference in *Der ewige Jude*, as pointed to above, the rigid demarcation of figures for identification, is of fundamental importance for the creation and maintenance of a separation in conflict as between the discourses and practices of the 'Jew', and the discourses and practices of the 'Aryan', and for the creation and maintenance of a position for the subject as one of identification with the latter and distance from and hostility toward the former. If *Jud Süß* shares a number of common features with *Der ewige Jude*, if it too is concerned with the demarcation and maintenance of difference, nevertheless its nature as a classical

32 text means that there is a constant pressure toward the resolution of its conflicts and contradictions through its narrative process, whose goal is precisely the re-integration, the re-stabilisation of those elements set in contradictory motion. Its only gesture of maintaining conflict and struggle can be an instance of the kind of semi-direct audience address referred to earlier in relation to *Ruggles of Red Gap*: in the final scene, Süß's hanging, we cut to the heroine's father who proclaims that all Jews are to be banned from the town. His (and the film's) last words are as follows: 'We advise all surrounding areas to do the same, to protect our children and our children's children.'

Other strategies of address, adopted to maintain a position of struggle, can be found in other classical texts. They usually take the form of exhortatory final titles. However, the fact that they often 'jar' the spectator is related to the fact that they jar with the whole impetus of the system of address of the classical text, not only with regard to the process of containment and homogenisation of contradiction, but also with regard to the status of the discourses and practices signified within it. These discourses and practices are, precisely, fictionalised. That is to say they are not marked as discourses and practices that have an existence outside of the text's diegetic space. Hence the possibility of an address to the spectator as a 'pure' transcendental subject, and hence the procedures for demarcating closure pointed to above.

The fact that *Der ewige Jude*, like so many other propaganda texts, takes the form of a documentary is significant in this respect, since documentaries do precisely mark the discourses and practices signified within them as having a contemporary independent existence. One of the roles of commentary is to do this. Thus the spectator is constituted as an explicitly social subject.² Propaganda documentaries are a mode in which the spectator is constituted as a social subject in struggle. Propaganda in general produces this position, but the documentary is a particularly apt form for it.

If propaganda as a form of textual address produces a position of social struggle (either within or across each of the instances of practice in the social formation – economic, political and ideological), this is not to say that there is only one modality of that form, that there are thus not a range of ways of producing such a position. *Der ewige Jude*, for instance, produces its position through a set of strategies whose effect is the rigid demarcation of elements in contradiction and the absorption of the subject

2. This difference between the inscribed subject of the classical text – ie the vehicle of 'entertainment' – and the inscribed subject of the documentary corresponds interestingly to the (ideological) division between 'private' and 'public' usual in capitalist social formations. As such it both produces and is product of that division.

as the place of coherent identification with one set of elements: 33
 the subject is thus not constituted as the site of contradiction, but as coherent and autonomous; contradiction is rather constituted as between the subject and the other, and in such a way that that other is made unbearable, thus constituted as that which must be destroyed; and this through a process of identification with a commentary that becomes, and offers itself as, the simple and necessary position of truth. These strategies go to make up what I would term a highly dogmatic mode of propagandist address. That this dogmatism is not a necessity for propaganda can be illustrated, I think, by comparing *Der ewige Jude* with *Kuhle Wampe* on the one hand and *Hour of the Furnaces* on the other. Each produces a position of social struggle, but they each do so differently.

Kuhle Wampe has been extensively discussed in *Screen* (see in particular James Pettifer, 'The Limits of Naturalism' and the ensuing 'Discussion' in *Screen* v 16 n 4, Winter 1975-76). However, it is worth re-emphasising in this context that, unlike *Der ewige Jude*, it does not separate out the contradictions it deals with in such a way that the spectator is simply placed, in a homogeneity, on one 'side' in a struggle, with 'solutions' for its outcome given in the place of identification. Thus, for instance, the German Communist Party is not structured as that which can provide a 'solution' as Hitler and the Nazi party are in *Der ewige Jude*. There is therefore no homogeneous and identifiable 'we' into which the 'you' of the spectator can be simply and tightly bound, no single and authoritative voice which can speak for the spectator. The film offers a position within struggle – a revolutionary proletarian position – but that position is neither secure nor comfortable. It is itself subject to contradiction.

Hour of the Furnaces is different again. Unlike *Kuhle Wampe*, it takes a documentary form; unlike *Der ewige Jude* it maintains and acknowledges a heterogeneity both in its material and in its audience: although it proposes a set of theses about the history of Argentina, and about the current situation³ and the forms of action it allows and demands, it inscribes spaces for reflection and discussion, for counter-proposition and counter-argument, even if, necessarily, it sets the terms for this. Thus the film is organised in three sections, and at the end of each there is a written invitation to debate; thus the second section begins with film of a discussion between the film-makers and an audience at the screen-

3. The 'current situation' is a crucial element in propagandist texts: propaganda places the spectator in relationships with discourses and practices existing outside of the text, as in a position of struggle vis-à-vis some, and (perhaps shifting) identification with others. The existence of those other discourses and practices is therefore necessarily posited as contemporary with the audience at the time of the text's production.

- 34 ing of (presumably) an earlier version of *Hour of the Furnaces* itself, in which the audience (both audiences, *within* the film and *of* the film) is invited to consider itself not as a group of spectators, but rather as a group of protagonists within the current situation in Argentina; thus the final section consists of interviews with and the reading of letters from various activists addressed to the audience from a basic position but structured as (equally valid) contributions to an ongoing debate about the conjuncture. Unlike *Der ewige Jude*, therefore, *Hour of the Furnaces* seeks not to bind the 'you' of its audience into the 'we' of its metadiscourse, but rather to set the terms of a debate between the two.

PROPAGANDA AND APPARATUS

What has been considered here is propaganda solely as a system of textual address: *Der ewige Jude* conforms to that mode, *Jud Süß* does not. However, this is to isolate the two films from the apparatuses of their production,⁴ distribution and consumption, and both text and apparatus from the conjuncture, thus to restrict the concept of address solely to an abstract text-subject relationship. I would want to argue in fact that 'address' is not simply synonymous with textual address; that although the latter can be analysed and has an effectivity, particular positions and modalities of position are a product of textual address in conjunction with the immediate discourses that necessarily surround it within the apparatuses that support it, and that these in turn owe their character, the particular modalities of position that *they* produce in interaction with a text, to ideological practices – the state of ideological struggle – within the conjuncture as a whole. From this perspective, *Jud Süß* can be held to be propaganda within the conjuncture of its initial production, distribution and consumption, most notably in relation to two sets of audience.

The conjuncture in relationship to the organisation of the ideological apparatuses within the social formation of Nazi Germany (and within the social formations of the countries it had subjugated

4. It is worth touching here on the question of the relationship between apparatuses and the production of propaganda. Generally speaking, propaganda is produced as an intervention from a particular apparatus (a political party, the State, the Church and so on). The 'we'-you' structure of its address is thus frequently one in which the 'we' is identified with a particular apparatus, which in turn claims to represent 'you', the audience. Hence one of the frequent traits of propaganda is that the apparatus concerned will be given discursive representation within the text. *Der ewige Jude*, for instance, has a structure in which the position of struggle is articulated such that the subject is given a place for identification from which that struggle can be resolved. That place is signified as the Nazi Party – the penultimate sequence of the film is, as mentioned above, one which consists of Hitler giving a speech on 'the Jewish problem' and the Party's attitude to it.

by 1940) can generally be characterised as one in which the autonomy of the ideological apparatuses, both as regards their relationships one with another and as regards their relationship as a whole with the repressive apparatuses, had been undermined. Although the former were rarely nationalised as such – newspapers, cinema, publishing, schools and so on largely retained their ‘private’ nature, at least as regards generating profits for their owners – their members were obliged to belong to public organisations: the Reich councils for Art, Music, Theatre, Authorship, Press, Radio, and Film. Within these, Nazi Party members held key posts and were generally invested with authority. It was therefore mainly through the Party that the ideological apparatuses were subjugated to the repressive apparatuses of the State. Alongside the State organisations referred to above, the Party maintained its own. Thus there was a multiplication and duplication of ideological apparatuses: ‘A variety of associations and organisations locked every individual into a complicated network of apparatuses covering every sector of activity’ (Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship*, London, 1974, p 347. See also pp 314-18; pp 331-33; pp 345-49). This dual structure of Party control within the ideological sphere (indirectly through the Reich councils and directly through its own apparatuses) was particularly significant in relation to the cinema. (For details of the inner organisation of film within the two spheres, and hence the nature of their duplication, see Francis Courtaide and Pierre Cadars, *Histoire du Cinéma nazi*, Paris 1972, pp 321-322.) On the one hand it permitted an (ideological) division between ‘entertainment’ and ‘politics’, a division embodied in Goebbels’s thinking on and policies for the cinema, while allowing close supervision over both and the possibility of carefully planned and calculated interventions in each: in terms of the initiation of the production of films with a particular theme; in terms of pre- and post-production censorship; and in terms of the public validation of particular films, this latter being especially interesting in that the categories established for awards and prizes specifically included politics. (The categories were: 1 Politically and artistically especially valuable. 2 Politically and artistically valuable. 3 Politically valuable. 4 Artistically valuable. 5 Culturally valuable. 6 Educationally valuable.) On the other hand it meant that products from each structure could be transferred to and easily inserted into each other (*Der ewige Jude*, for example, was produced by the Party and distributed and exhibited within the Party apparatus, yet it was also shown in public cinemas). Both of these aspects were important for *Jud Süß* and its function within the ideological conjuncture in relation to particular audiences. Josef Wulf points to the nature of that conjuncture, and the role of anti-semitic films within it, as follows:

‘It is no coincidence that the three anti-semitic movies *Die*

- 36 *Rothschilds, Jud Süß, and Der ewige Jude* were premiered precisely in 1940. Unquestionably Goebbels had those three films made and shown because of the planned 'Final Solution of the Jewish Problem', even though the actual date when that 'final solution' was decided by the mighty Third Reich has not been established with complete accuracy' (cit in D S Hull, *Film in the Third Reich*, California, 1969, p 170).

Whether Goebbels was personally responsible for initiating these particular films has not, to my knowledge, been clearly established. Nevertheless it is true that, late in 1938, the Propaganda Ministry sent to all German film companies a request to produce anti-semitic films, and their place within the conjuncture seems clear, coinciding with a gradual escalation of anti-semitic ideology: with for instance the 'Ewig Jude' exhibition at the 'Deutsches Museum' and the publication of a book by Dr Hans Diebow under the same title; and certainly the production and general supervision of the three films mentioned by Wulf was treated with enormous care by the Propaganda Ministry. *Jud Süß* was supervised by Goebbels himself, and he not only had a large part in choosing the cast and director, but also had a hand in revising the script and caused the ending to be re-shot and re-edited. (For a full account see Hull, op cit, pp 164-168). It could be argued that, within the conjuncture, both as a whole, and as regards the ideological instance within it, *Jud Süß* operated as propaganda (ie produced a position of struggle vis-à-vis the Jewish race within the current situation) with all its audiences. It is certainly the case, though, that it did so with two sets of audience in particular, the Army and the political police, and the 'Aryan' populations to the occupied East of Germany, especially Poland. Himmler ordered the film compulsory viewing for all military troops at home and on the front, for the police, and for the SS, the latter being particularly important in that they had and would continue to have an important role to play in the establishment and running of the concentration camps. With regard to the latter audience, Josef Wulf wrote that

'... the movie *Jud Süß* was always shown to the 'Aryan' population, especially in the East, when 'resettlements' for the death camps were imminent. ... It is certain that the film was shown in order to incense in this way the 'Aryan' population against Jews in the respective countries, and thus to choke off in the bud any possible help to them on the part of the people' (cit Hull, op cit, p 170).

Jud Süß was thus used as an element within a precisely calculated and *politically based* ideological intervention. (To produce racial difference in ideology within the occupied countries – to produce a racist audience and hence a racist population – was

precisely a *political* problem, both for the occupying troops and administration and for the Nazi government in Germany). That it was able to play such a role was due to the organisation of ideological apparatuses, and their articulation vis-à-vis the political apparatuses of State and Party, as outlined above, and to the nature of the cinematic institution within them: to its particular orders of address.

While, as mentioned earlier, there was a division as between 'entertainment' and 'politics', and while the bulk of films were produced and consumed as entertainment, there was a weakening of the boundaries between the two (as instanced in the award system, for example), and there was a point at which they constantly overlapped and reinforced each other. This point was nationalism.

Within Germany itself, as is well known, nationalism was a powerful political force. It was manifest in a number of different ways in the cinema and in the cultural field generally: through the use of figures like Schiller and Wagner; through the reactivation of German mythology; through the banning of 'non-Aryan' and 'degenerate' art; through the proliferation of films set in what are marked as 'key points' in German history; through the production of films and other cultural products with anti-British, anti-American, anti-Russian and anti-Jewish themes. The cinema itself was a double focus for nationalism in that it both participated in the production of nationalist ideology and at the same time was subject to constant attention owing to its almost continual decline, both in financial terms, and in terms of audience attendance and popularity (a state of affairs which persisted until the beginning of the War). Most Hollywood films – the most popular and lucrative – were banned, as were the films of many other countries. Hence there was a constant stress upon, and fostering of, the film industry as a *national* industry and its product as a *national* product. Hence its audience was constantly addressed as a *German* audience watching a *German* film. If the industry's dominant product was entertainment, it was above all *German* entertainment.

Given this mode of address, the cinematic institution could relatively easily accommodate propaganda – particularly propaganda of a nationalist and/or racist nature.

POPULISM, HOLLYWOOD AND PROPAGANDA

It is now possible to return to the issues of Populism and propaganda in Hollywood. Here the particular films established as Populist are neither propagandist in textual form, nor are structured as propaganda within the conjuncture. This is due above all to the nature of the dominant form of address of Hollywood as a specific cinematic institution, and to the articulation of ideological and

38 political apparatuses that constitutes one of its primary conditions of existence.

The relationship of Hollywood to the State, certainly in ideological matters, has always been one of mutual autonomy. (Even during the Second World War, there was a constant resistance by Hollywood to 'interference' by the State. An account of one particular instance of this – involving Hollywood and the Office of War Information – is given in R D McCann, *The People's Films*, New York, 1973, pp 132-133). The area of censorship is a particularly good example of this. From the early 1920s onward, Hollywood has constantly attempted to institute a self-regulating system of censorship. Significantly, the pressure for this derived not from threatened interference by the Federal Government, but from a series of censorship laws passed by individual states and the problems it posed were as much commercial as ideological: legislation by individual states would make many films unmarketable on a national scale and would thus interfere with the smooth economic running of the interconnected networks of production, distribution and exhibition. Significantly again, the solution to this problem was not a system of Federal censorship, but a system of self-censorship – the Hays Code – finally and effectively instituted in 1934. (See Neville March Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law*, London, 1967, pp 152-160.)⁵ There was thus no legally established, institutionalised relationship between Hollywood and the various State apparatuses in America, even in the area of negative control through censorship. The same applies to the relationship between Hollywood and the various American political parties and groups, which is not to say that the ideology of these parties and groups had no effect on Hollywood films – Populism in the 1930s is precisely an instance of this – but that there was no institutionalised mechanism for direct intervention by any one of them in terms of the production of propaganda.

Hollywood's autonomy reinforced, and was reinforced by, its mode of address as an ideological institution, a mode that can be characterised as above all that of entertainment, and, unlike the cinema in Nazi Germany, it was simply constituted as such within the ideological conjuncture during the 1930s. Hollywood was a 'dream factory', a purveyor of 'escapism' and 'fantasy' in a period of hardship, economic depression and social unrest. Thus,

5. Curiously, the one institution that did have a considerable impact on Hollywood was the Catholic Church, through the Catholic Legion of Decency. Moreover this impact was not only negative, a matter of censorship and boycotts, but also positive: the 1930s and 1940s in particular saw a number of films in which nuns and priests featured as important, if not main, protagonists. This raises the interesting question as to why it was that Catholicism became the predominant religious ideology inscribed into Hollywood films and the Legion of Decency the most potent and effective pressure group on the industry.

for instance, the relatively new element of sound was exploited – and largely understood within the industry – not as a component necessary for additional realism, but as an element of *spectacle* in a medium of *entertainment*. (It was first introduced purely in the form of music, and the musical became one of the predominant genres during the thirties). It is true that a number of ‘social problem’ films were made in the thirties, but these usually took the form of gangster films, films that provided above all the values of excitement and spectacle. Indeed the establishment and proliferation of the gangster film during this period can be read as precisely a process of the *containment* of ‘social problems’ through their production, ideologically, as Hollywood entertainment. In a similar way, Populism, a very strong political and ideological force at this time, found its way into Hollywood largely in the form of comedy entertainment, something which relates back to an earlier point about the management of contradiction through ‘fantastic’ modes of resolution – allowed, indeed encouraged and motivated, by the conventions of entertainment. (Thus they may better be described as producing a ‘Populist-entertainment’ position rather than simply a Populist one.) Alternatively, ‘social problems’ were demarcated as ‘news’, in series like *The March of Time*. In the United States, there was no ideological element like nationalism binding entertainment, social issues and politics together, at least not in Hollywood.

Hence, owing to the conjuncture in America, owing to the relationship of Hollywood to political and to other ideological apparatuses, and owing to the nature of its institutional mode of address, there was no possibility of its films functioning as propaganda, at least within the United States itself. In certain foreign countries the situation may well have been different, but this is largely irrelevant to the Populist films under consideration, since they specifically focussed on American traditions and institutions. (Lincoln, the Senate, the rural Midwest, and so on.)

CONCLUSION

In attempting to theorise the concept of propaganda, it has been necessary to re-cast a set of basic terms and assumptions, to re-cast the problematic in which propaganda has predominantly been thought. What this has entailed is that on the one hand propaganda cannot simply be identified with one particular mode of its problematic of address – dogmatism – and thus dismissed as such, and on the other that the identification of any one text as propaganda can never simply be a matter of the reading off of a set of textual characteristics. What has to be identified is the *use* to which a particular text is put, to its function within a particular situation, to its place within cinema conceived as a *social practice*. The particular instance examined, that of *Jud Süß*,

40 was one in which a film with non-propagandist textual properties functioned as propaganda within a particular conjuncture, in particular institutional spaces, and in relation to particular audiences. However, there are, equally, instances in which propagandist texts can be placed within a space of address in which their nature as propaganda can be totally defused. The following quotation on *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* is a good, and rather typical, example of this:

'Neither *Triumph* nor *Olympia* could have been made by a propagandist pure and simple. They are self-evidently the work of an artist, even if an artist of an immensely naive political nature. No doubt the rising chorus of Reifentahl detractors themselves sensed that her success was the result more of genius than of mere luck or of the patronage of everyone's common enemy, Hitler' (Robert Gardner, 'Can the Will Triumph?', *Film Comment*, Winter 1965, p 30).

Thus what has to be argued is that both the identification and evaluation of propaganda have to be based on an assessment of the conjuncture, and that the latter in particular must always proceed from a constructed ideological and political position, in relation both to the conjuncture as a whole and to the particular text under consideration.⁶

6. I have not attempted here to introduce and theorise the distinction between propaganda and agitation. Such a distinction would have to proceed, I think, from the initial definitions given by Plekhanov, and elaborated upon by Lenin in *What is to be Done?* Plekhanov's distinction is that a propagandist presents many ideas to one or a few persons; an agitator presents only one or a few ideas, but he presents them to a mass of people'. It should be borne in mind, as far as film is concerned, that this was written before its development. Therefore the question of audience, of 'a few persons' or 'a mass of people', would need to be re-thought, and would in any case be relative: *Der ewige Jude* presented 'many ideas', but it did so to a mass of people. A re-formulated distinction would be based largely, I think, on the issue of 'many ideas' as against 'one or a few ideas'. An agitational film would address a particular and tightly focussed issue within the current situation, producing a position of struggle based not on an intricate analysis but on the representation of a single contradiction within the issue addressed. Examples may well include some of the films made by the Film and Photo League in America in the 1930s, and the films made by Cinema Action in Britain today. A book called *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* by Ernesto Laclau has recently been published by NLB. Chapters 3 and 4, dealing with Fascism and Populism respectively, are of evident interest in relation to this article, though they deal with Fascist and Populist ideology at a more general level than I have attempted.

Al Rees

INTRODUCTION Of the major difficulties in discussing the avant-garde, the first is that the current avant-gardes are multiple, often divergent, but interconnected. Peter Wollen ('The Two Avant-Gardes', *Studio International*, Nov/Dec 1975) has discussed this in relation to two main blocs of avant-garde work, but even within one isolable bloc there are complex distinctions to be made. It is often hard to assess what elements are specific to or shared between different types of avant-gardism, particularly in contemporary or ongoing activity. This essay begs that question by concentrating on films made in the intersecting zones of New American Cinema, structural films and 'co-op' films. Although there appear to be good reasons, both historical and theoretical, for discussing Brakhage, Gidal, Warhol, Sharits, Snow, Frampton, Le Grice and others in relation to each other, it is not yet clear how the connections are to be substantiated, what analytical methods might be used, nor where different terms of discussion need to replace each other in making the complicated passages between psychodrama, minimalism, film-as-research and so on, all of which have been exemplified in this broad segment of film-making.

This exchange and interchange causes the second difficulty, which is more than terminological although it concerns the theoretical status of terms used in argument within the avant-garde – for example, *illusion* and *representation*. Figures as divergent (looking at differences now) as those listed above (excluding Warhol) have all used the term *illusionism* to refer to the tendency of codically constructed narrative cinema to posit a single, unproblematic spectator who becomes psychoanalytically implicated (and trapped) in a diegetic world which is unquestionable in viewing and whose source of control is beyond the possibility of intervention by the spectator; it is other to the spectator. However, it is possible to argue that codified narrative is not as monolithic and undifferentiated as sometimes appears in the writings of the avant-garde (Brakhage, Sharits and Gidal all have their own verbal equivalents of 'Hollywood-Mosfilm'). The tentative analyses offered by – say – Burch/Dana, and the critical response to their typology from within cinema-semiotics, suggest much divergence and that is as simplistic to refer to illusionism as it is to *the* avant-garde. Nor is it always clear if a distinction is being made between political-ideological illusionism and illusionism as an ontological issue. Although both Sharits and Gidal are aware in their writings

42 of the distinction between illusion and representation, Gidal in particular tends to collapse one into the other.

These questions affect the notion of deconstructing cinematic codes and raise the question of whether, in the avant-garde, these codes are formulated from the practice of narrative films, or whether any are generated from specifically within the avant-garde (an argument with a history, since the early abstract films of Richter and Eggeling seems to be derivative of music and painting, with subsidiary reference to cinematic codes as such). Several different tendencies may be located: films which have as their specific object the examination and deconstruction of narrative coding (certain films by Jacobs, Birgit and Wilhelm Hein or – more lightly – Connor); films which share the codes of narrative cinema but which foreground them or interpret them poetically or tangentially (Anger, Rice, J Smith, Markopoulos); films which seek a basis for codification outside of those associated with narrativity, and so on.

This article cannot engage with these important issues of cinema and codification, but assumes two principles which really demand prior investigation; the existence and coherence of the codes of narrative cinema, and a relatively clear concept of the avant-garde.

MODERNISM Peter Wollen, in his study of the 'ontology' of cinema ('"Ontology" and "materialism" in film', *Screen* v 17 n 1, Spring 1976) describes how the Bazinian search for an essence of cinema and a concern for the ontological nature of film is taken up by the American avant-garde. Paradoxically, Bazin and the avant-garde both argue against the narrative coding of cinema, but in completely different terms. For Bazin, the cinematic codes would disappear when meaning became transferred to the non-cinematic codes, so that film language would disappear as cinema 'possesses itself of the integral reality which was its mythic destiny'. As will be seen, part of the modernist enterprise is the reversal of this desire, by the abolition of the non-cinematic codes and investigation/foregrounding of the cinematic ones.

One source of the paradox is to be found in the particular conjunction of elements in the formation of American modernism, itself closely allied to international modernism in the arts. Modernism's origins are as diverse as its practices, and the tangle of elements needs to be separated out. Bazin's own stance was explicitly anti-modernist, for he saw it, correctly, as a syncretic, pluralist and constructive interpretation of art, splitting that bond of the spiritual and the natural which formed the centre of his philosophy. The unity of the sign was, in modernism, deflected in order to focus on the process of signification and to demonstrate the role of the signifying apparatus.

This new complexity in the use of the sign entered painting

before the other arts, and its first coherent achievement is cubism. In America, the entry of European artists in the period 1920-1940 who were familiar with post-cubism – including surrealists, expressionists and formalists – was important in the formation of American painting (and led it away from a populist/naturalist stylistic allied to one expression of social radicalism). Comparable developments occurred in allied arts and intellectual work (two prime institutional examples being the New School for Social Research and Black Mountain College).

This complex shift of influences was extended by the travels of American artists, and was rich in exchange of ideas as well as infiltration of them. The size, scale and imagery of American life equally affected the European sensibility which was used to re-interpret them. It is possible to overemphasise the purely aesthetic effects of modernism and its extensive and self-referential use of code and signifier. Other elements of modernism, particularly in relation to its development in America, require emphasis.

Cubism itself, for example, redefined rather than rejected perception, and never became non-figurative (there is a limited but recurrent cubist iconography – bottles, guitars, newspapers, tables, glasses, pipes). The total abstraction of Mondrian and Kandinsky, although it can be related to notions such as seriality, was underpinned by spiritual or mystical ontologies and was not self-referential in intention. The earliest examples of art as the act of signification, the emphasis on specifically painterly colour, flatness and artistic rather than illustrative qualities, are found in the symbolists (leaving aside the even more complicated contributions of Courbet and Manet), who retained both mystical and figurative reference. Such underpinnings, using material not specific to painting, are also present in the early stages of American ascendancy in the modernist movement – explicitly in Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Tobey, Jackson Pollock, and in the use of Indian and other cosmic myths in the work of Barnett Newman and others. The poetry of Olson, Creeley, Snyder, Dorn and Duncan (several of these friends of Brakhage) also has mythopoeic reference, and only by an intricate route is it linked to the 'word-as-such' of *Novy Lef*. John Cage, a central figure not only in music and dance, is concerned with the sound as material unit and signification, but also with sound (or silence) as indicative of natural meaning.

Modernism, at least at this stage, is not simply reducible to isolation of the signifier as self-referential object and subject of the aesthetic work. The emphasis on art-as-device is overlaid by other sources of meaning. Modernism clearly does include the foregrounding of the constitutive elements of art, and is reflective of the codes it deploys, but this is less than the totality of the modernist project. This will be seen in two restatements of a similar conception. The first is in Brakhage, where modernist

- 44 film is seen as having a duality of reference: his work contains foregrounding of the signification process, but through the use of a conceptual underpinning of a romantic and mythic kind. A second version of this concept of duality will be seen in the anti-illusionist stance of structural film (Sharits would be a good bridging example), where the problem is put in terms of the duality of film as (1) material substrate and (2) device for representation.

BRAKHAGE Brakhage's relevance to codification rests on two important aspects of his practice in film-making:

1. Associative editing by shape, form and colour, partly derived from Eisenstein,

2. The use of flares, visible splices, camera shake, scratching on film, relative exposure.

On the first – editing – the exact relations of Brakhage to Eisenstein are complex; Brakhage comments on some of them in a lecture and in Frampton's interview with him in *Art Forum* (Jan 1973). I merely want here to point to a possible connection between Brakhage's multi-levelled editing and Eisenstein's theory of dominant and sub-dominant montage, in both of which the screened events are accessible to a spectator, a viewing subject, whose emotional, memory, and visual systems are deployed in such a way that a 'single' viewing consciousness is rendered impossible. This technique, which fissures the spectator in the act of viewing, is related to types of writing which are connected, if remotely: modernism in the futurist poets and Joyce for Eisenstein, and for Brakhage both Joyce and contemporary American poets. Here, the reading subject is faced with work which constantly shifts both register and discursive voice. Olson and Pound provide examples, where often discourse (as the poet's voice, elusive and multichanneled) and 'histoire' (literally, in the *Cantos* or *Maximus*) are inflected together through linguistic manoeuvre and the technical devices offered by typography (the typewriter in particular, which can assume a determining role in writing and need not be simply a machine for transcription). The reading response to these texts requires the abolition of the single, unproblematic reader, in favour of a shifting and layered consciousness working and acting on the word-events against the limiting power of syntax, itself disrupted as part of the process. This has a crucial if perverse relationship to what will later be said about the spectator.

The 'inserts' in *Dog Star Man* (between segments of the man climbing the mountain) are read both as personal images in the man's memory or consciousness and as textured images, which refer outwards from the film into nature (which provided them) and hence – for Brakhage – into the spectator. They can be read in a literal manner (memories, thoughts, impressions, etc. of the character on the screen) or in a structural way, as related to the

context and situation of the man but not necessarily as having been derived from him, the motivation being sought in the formal plane of the images, in the editing code and systems of permutation.

On the second element of deconstruction in Brakhage (flares, etc), these can be seen as a form of extreme camera naturalism on the principle that these things exist, are part of the film presence, but are usually either excised in film production or remain unused possibilities. Brakhage's totalising notion of seeing (one of his films is called *The Act Of Seeing With One's Own Eyes*, the literal translation of 'autopsy'!) demands that they be mobilised. The importance of visuality encourages him to foreground the devices for which the camera, the machine that conveys vision, is mostly responsible. Just as at the level of nature Brakhage is concerned to reinstate those elements in perception that are usually excluded by the 'filtration' of knowledge (phosphenes, disturbances in the eye . . .) as part of his project towards an art of vision, so at the level of form he wants to permit and to cinematise the mechanical and technical totality of filming, processing, manipulating and printing. This is not so much distanciation (although Brakhage does speak about a 'kick' to the spectator's assumptions and norms in viewing) but rather inclusion.

In another perspective it is the value given to construction that perhaps links Brakhage with post-painterly developments of American modernism, and these are best revealed in his attitude to editing, which he considers to be the pinnacle moment in film-making. The cinematic codes are deconstructed and recombined, with additions, and their existence is affirmed as specific to film. The means by which he has done so have been important to other film-makers, as expressed by Annette Michelson:

'Brakhage's insistence on the materiality of the filmic support, the filmic filtering of light, his revision of the sound-image relation, his subversion of the space in which narrative takes place, initiates the development of that detailed critique of illusion which marks the passage from *cinema* to *film*' (*Projected Images*, Minneapolis, 1974).

The extent of Brakhage's work should also be mentioned – the strong mythopoeic and hypnagogic stress noted by Sitney, but also films of structure (eg, *Horseman, Woman and Moth*) and one film of direct address – *Blue Moses* – which offers an analysis/parody of theatrical convention in film and a restatement of both film material and the place of a film-maker who is inscribed in the work – the repeated line in the last section, 'Behind every film stands a film-maker', operates in conjunction with complex and free use of shadow, minimalist landscape, a short history of drama, reprojection and a play on both filmic and actual space.

Clearly, as Michelson shows, Brakhage's work on codes in practised for reasons which may not be shared by others, although

46 his influence is recognised across the range of the avant-garde. His personal practice is in a context of an attack on the conventionalism and anti-individualism of Hollywood, the assertion of film material as essence and as the place of the film-maker's mark, the creation of a space for the personal voice, and so on. Other film-makers (it is not possible to be complete) are interested in work that comes closer to a post-semiotic or counter-cinema. Frampton (*Zorns Lemma*), Snow (*Rameau's Nephew . . .*) and Landow (*Remedial Reading Comprehension*) have made films which deliberately attempt to inscribe the process of the production of meaning into the film text; and in all these cases, the importance of language, and its connection/disjunction with *visuality and abstraction*, are part of the work of the films. This significantly alters the anti-intellectualist stand associated with the New American Cinema in which knowledge is counterposed to sensuality and visceral experience. In the next section, however, I am concerned with an intermediate level of approach between Brakhage's essentially unverbaised cinema and these films in which language is a constituent, mediating and foregrounded element; films in which the spectator is rendered problematic through an insistence that he/she reacts to and constructs the process of perception itself, notions which have both phenomenological and formalist importance.

THE ATTACK ON ILLUSIONISM Illusionism is repeatedly attacked by the avant-garde, and it is necessary to know what is implied in this strategy. Gidal puts it like this:

'The avant-garde film produces certain relations between segments, between what the camera is aimed at and the way that "image" is presented. The dialectic of the film is established in that space of tension between materialist flatness, grain, light, movement, and the supposed reality that is represented. Consequently, a continual attempt to destroy the illusion is necessary. In structural/materialist film, the in/film (not in/frame) and film/viewer material relations, and the relations of the film's structure, are primary to any representational content' (*Structural Film Anthology*, BFI, 1976).

Gidal wants to distinguish this position from formalism, since he is expounding a perpetual questioning and analysis of film while viewing, going beyond the presentation of formal patterning (as in the work of the early avant-garde animators). Therefore, the main claim is that avant-garde film opens a space for the spectator as well as the film-maker, in opposition to the narrative codes which repress time, space and the viewer: 'Closing the gap between viewer and viewed, and between the representation in one shot and another, is a basic repressive device' (*ibid*, p 9). These attitudes imply a directness that leads to an attack on all represen-

tation (including such usages as black leader to indicate 'camera motor turned off'): 'Illusion mystifies real filmic relations' (ibid, p 16). Deconstruction, in the sense in which the term has been applied to Godard and Straub, is rejected on the grounds that it recuperates narrative and illusion, and denies the 'basic cinematic structure, duration' (ibid), becoming illustration.

Illusionism attempts to integrate, rather than to productively exploit, the 'space of tension' between the signifying and codifying elements of cinema and the image. An example of exploitation is a film which uses 'differences', such as Dunford's *Deep Space*, where the same scene is shot using three different forms of camera movement and stability (Dunford and Brakhage both also use camera shake to foreground the physical source of the image).

There is considerable common ground among 'structural' filmmakers on both sides of the Atlantic about the role of the spectator. As Landow said in a film, 'This is a film about you - not about its maker'. Gow, in an article about Le Grice, says (in a Brakhage-like pun) 'perception is of the essence'. Le Grice, writing about Kren, explains further:

'[Structural film] does not *express* experience derived from the world: it *forms* experience in the trace of a dialectic between perceiver and perceived. [It concentrates on] structure as process or activity' (op cit, p 60).

Sharits has a related comment on illusionism:

'In my cinema flashes of projected light initiate neutral transmission as much as they are analogues of such transmission systems and . . . the human retina is as much a "movie screen" as is the screen proper. . . . By re-examining the basic mechanisms of motion pictures and by making these fundamentals explicitly concrete, I feel as though I am working towards a new conception of cinema. Technically, "abstract films", because they are extensions of the aesthetics and pictorial principles of painting or are simply illustrations of optics, are no more cinematic than narrative-dramatic films. . . . I wish to abandon imitation and illusion and enter directly into the higher drama of: celluloid, two-dimensional strips; individual rectangular frames; the nature of sprockets and emulsion; projector operations; the three-dimensional light beam; environmental illumination; the two-dimensional reflective screen surface; the retinal screen; optic nerve and individual psycho-physical subjectivities of consciousness' (op cit, p 90).

There are differences here from the other references; referring to his own 'thematic structures' he calls them occasions for 'meditation-visionary experience', and there is a Platonic element in his view of light as the profilmic event rather than the medium

48 for it ('Light is energy rather than a tool for the representation non-filmic objects; light, as energy, is released to "create" its own objects, shapes and textures' (ibid)). Sharits represents a shift from seeking ontology in mimesis to looking for it in the properties of the film-making apparatus. In 'Words per page' he claims film has a dual nature, as recording and as optical-material process. As Wollen states, iconic reference is maintained since image registration is a physical property of film. An example of a film that maintains iconic features and use of the optical-material process would be Landow's *Film In Which There Appears Spocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, etc.* A similar use of this duality is seen in Snow's contrast of two and three dimensional space. Film material is both substrate and signifier. It is at this point that the work of Sharits gives a rationale for work on the spectator's place in the film, approaching the problem from a different route than the European film-makers. The attack on 'filmed drama' indicates an ideological position but the main reason for spectator work and anti-illusionism is provided, for Sharits, by the optical nature and engagement of the medium.

THE SPECTATOR AND THE AVANT-GARDE The stance which has been outlined so far, which renders the place of the spectator problematic, is counterposed to what Metz calls 'the mental machinery which spectators "accustomed to the cinema" have internalised historically and which has adapted them to the consumption of films'. ('The Imaginary Signifier', *Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer, 1975). It represents what the editors of the 1976 *Edinburgh Magazine* called 'a shift from the object cinema [to the] operation cinema', identified as a 'specific signifying practice which places the spectator'. It is distinct too from Deren's substitution of poetic dominance for narrative dominance. Its relation to the narrativity of *Nostalgia*, *Wavelength* or *La Région Centrale* is more of a problem, particularly given the reliance on metaphor/allegory in North-American structuralism. Although certain films of Snow and Frampton can be called post-semiotic, Gidal claims that an emphasis on the act of making by documentation, representation or minimalist suppression of a discursive element actually reinstates the dominant role of the artist. Some works escape by exploiting gaps, since in the 'nearly empty signifier . . . the image taken does not have a ready associative analogue, is not a given symbol or metaphor or allegory' (*Structural Film Anthology*, cit, p 7).

Dusinberre's analysis of the English avant-garde in *Afterimage*, n 6, Summer, 1976, seems to point a way out of the dilemma raised by Gidal. I will suggest that where there appears to be an 'associative' element in certain co-op films, as in the use of landscape, this is to be understood in terms of a concept of literalness which takes account of connotation in the represented

image, manifested through the iconic function.

In his discussion, Dusiñberre points to the privileging of the 'temporal aspect of the filmic experience' in the English avant-garde as an attempt to utilise the inherent linearity or successive-ness of film, the subordination of 'image-content' to 'image-production' and the rejection of narrativity also being prominent. He locates three overlapping trends in current works:

1. Structural asceticism (with its origin in the anarchic Fluxus group), which rejects the notions of 'goal-directedness' and transcendence offered by Sitney in his initial discussion of structural film. The project is to 'efface the cinematic image' without using total abstraction, and represents a rejection of the material/representation duality in favour of the material side - light on the screen which evokes texture, depth, image and potential (but rejected) illusion.

2. Expanded/performance films, which subordinate the illusionist aspect of the image by asserting the projection factor in the production of images and the role of the audience in image-perception (the emphasis here being on the projection apparatus, and the use of space and duration).

3. Landscape films, which assert the illusionism of imagery through 'the sensuality of landscape' in conjunction with 'the material character of the representational process which sustains the illusion'. As an aspect of this process and of a concept of literalism, the landscape can be an 'integral factor in determining the shape of the film' (eg, Welsby's use of a trip-shutter in *Park Film*). A further literal aspect of these films is that their didacticism and concern for the production of the image is shown at an immediate level: 'they show the way they operate through that very operation'. There is an obvious connection to films by Sharits and Snow in this formulation. The critique of anti-illusionism is marked in the sensual and connotative imagery and in the rejection of simple duration and one-to-one correspondence of real/projection time by the use of time-lapse and a polysensory deployment of multi-screen projection.

Dusiñberre summarises the characteristics of the English avant-garde as (1) the subordination of image-content to image-production, and (2) the emphasis on the devices of image-production and the perception of the spectator.

This, he goes on, is associated with the 'presentational literalness of contemporary art', asserting the primacy of perception as a condition for comprehension. 'This places the spectator in a continual moment of reflection, demanding an awareness of the act of apprehension tantamount to constant reflectiveness.' The perceiver, rather than the artist, is made responsible for the production of meaning, a specifically modernist tendency, although it marks a reversal of Deren's 'verticality' (atemporal elaboration of an idea or feeling) and 'horizontalty' (temporal development

50 of an action) as well as of Sitney's goal-orientation and notion of formal shape.

The emphasis on the activity of the spectator is also raised in the same issue of *Afterimage* in Paul Willemen's article on Steve Dwoskin. In this he quotes Metz in 'History/Discourse' (PW's translation):

'Conventional films tend to suppress all marks of the subject, of the (filmic) énonciation, so that the spectator may have the impression of being that subject but as an empty and absent subject, reduced to the mere faculty of vision . . . all the seen is rejected towards the side of the pure object.'

Willemen claims that 'the viewer of Hollywood films is allowed to imagine him/herself as invisible', this being – in Metz's words:

'a drastically split situation in which the double denial without which there would be no story (*histoire*) is maintained at all costs; the seen ignores that it is seen . . . and that ignorance allows the viewer to ignore himself/herself as voyeur.'

The subject, for Metz, is inscribed as 'invisible, empty and absent'.

Avant-garde film as outlined here, in its concern for the viewer and viewing, has as its project the breaking of the unity between fantasy and the scopic drive utilised by narrative cinema and towards which its codes tend. Willemen adds to Laura Mulvey's typology of three 'cinema looks', a fourth, a look at the viewer. This is Lacan's 'look that cannot be seen, but a look imagined by me in the field of the other, (which) surprises me in the act of voyeurism and occasions a feeling of shame'. This, claims Willemen, is also Sartre's look in *Being and Nothingness* (and in *St. Genet*), which constitutes me in relation to the other. Filmically, says Willemen, this look

'constitutes the viewer as visible subject. A tangible signifier of the look (not to be confused with the look itself, which is "imagined") can be found in the reflection of the light of the screen/projector beam back onto the faces of the viewers.'

It is this space which has been opened up by the avant-garde work noted above, with its systems of 'open' projection and even its actual use of 'bounce-back' light. Although Willemen is concerned with the fourth look in terms of the cinema image, his remarks lead to the speculation that the fourth look inscribes not only the image but the look of the cinema itself, in relation to new practices exploiting the gaps in viewing and the subject. The fourth look opens up the operation of the cinema as a machine and the operation of the spectator upon it.

A possible justification for this extension, particularly in relation to Dusinberre's and other statements about performance, may be

found later in the article, where Willemen says that the cinematic institution – including theatres and projection facilities – ‘conspires to avoid or minimise the fourth look; even to the rear seats, those best protected against it, being the most expensive!’ He goes on, in a remark that again recalls the attitude to the active spectator found in the avant-garde: ‘the presence of the fourth look has considerable implications regarding the social experience of film-going and may offer an insight into the differences between the subject/object/spectacle relations in cinema and theatre’.

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LITERALNESS I have tried to show that historically and now avant-garde film has not exclusively concentrated on film as substance, but is committed to signification, with a growing emphasis on *signification* as a process which centres on the perceiving subject. Film-makers who are interested in filmic essence also tend (like Sharits) to be concerned with problems beyond the tautological affirmation of the existence of film material – although, as Dusiinberre says about the English avant-garde, ‘the line between literalness and an empty tautology is a line too fine to be drawn by many film-makers’. Where illusionism is denied and the properties of the film are validated, it is again signifying practice that is at stake, signification being involved at the iconic level of image-production or through indexical and other manipulations. The codes and systems of film may be taken as the prime area of work by film-makers, not simply to show that signifiers exist and can become their own field of representation, but to validate them as the passages through which film constitutes and alters meaning. Despite Gidal’s attacks on illusionism, his own films do not challenge the iconic function, and – combined with manipulations of framing, focus, movement and printing – the spaces depicted become the starting points for his work on film signification. ‘Illusionism’ usually implies not the rejection of the image (although it can do) but the construction of alternative worlds, diegeses.

It can be claimed that these alternative worlds are more intricate and more concerned with the production of meaning than Gidal, for one, gives them credit for, and that distinctions need to be made between mimesis, naturalism, representations, fictions and other modes. Further, all systems of image-production are codified in some demonstrable way. To avoid a sterile argument, it is interesting to see what ‘illusionism’ is opposed to – significantly, in many writers it is not ‘truth’ but something like ‘consciousness of illusion/image-production/space for viewer’. That is to say, the notion of illusion in film is countered by a series of concepts that are explicitly centred on the act of deconstruction. It is not truth versus fiction (the source of many revolutions in both dominant cinema and variants which utilise its codes, or in many of the early painterly and cinematic avant-gardes) but con-

52 sciousness of codification and its relation to the production and ultimate reading of images.

The use of literalism here may seem paradoxical, since it might imply direct, uncoded, unmediated information. However, in Dusi-berre's usage it can again be seen that the function of coding is recognised as part of the production of meaning. It is not a Bazinian usage, since it is distinguished by both a concept of code and a rejection of the moralism implied in Bazin's position. Bazin's concept of reality is only sensible, in the context of his writings, of a religious interpretation, albeit an unstable one in which the natural is always in danger of being wrenched from the physical. Literalness, in the sense of affirming the iconic and coded function of the cinema, need have no moral qualities at all. Its context is not the integrity of the real and the spatial but one informed by a knowledge of image-production, codification and historical-technical determination in cinema. Nor is it related to cinema-vérité, the motivation of which is to focus on a concept of truth rather than the eliminable cinema which conveys it. Cinema-vérité is posited on the ability of the camera to record meaningful events, these events having structured themselves so that the camera can claim and recall their veracity. Literalness does not have to assume that the events filmed have this sort of veracity, distinct from their presence in the cinema – some examples of cinematic literalness (Wollen/Mulvey, Straub/Huillet, Godard, Warhol, Snow) make it perfectly obvious that what is being shown does not in a religious sense pre-exist the cinema that produced it – the spaces shown, we are usually informed, are there because of their place in the film. As in direct looks at the camera, moments are presented that show the role of the pro-filmic as literally 'for the film' which displays them, rather than as pre-cinematic with the cinema present as historical accident.

This point feeds too into the devices acclaimed by Sitney for structural film; fixed frame, flicker, loop, rephotography. They are the means, among others, by which cinema signifies, and their presence is a mark not only that the films were made by a named person but that they were constructed. Splices, bars, flares, scratches exist as marks in the film-text of the process of construction. The history of modernism shows how the aesthetic marks which compose cultural practice are foregrounded in the system which employs them. Avant-garde film arguably works on codification and the codified, which extends the notion of working on essence and material, making it less restrictive and aimed specifically at the spectator.

CONCLUSION – MODERNISM AND THE TEXT Wollen's account of modernism in the 'Ontology' article contrasts Hollywood practice, where reference and denotation govern the structuring of narrative films, which have a determinate meaning, with certain avant-

garde procedures. With the removal of the need to capture likeness through 'the iconic code or code of analogy', new structural principles, perhaps serially or randomly generated, can be introduced and underpinned by self-reference (an interesting shift, in that early modernism underpinned self-reference by extra-aesthetic reference). Film could be both autonomous object and its own representation. For Sharits, representation can be iconic or a 'multiple-mapping procedure', using phenomena often overlooked in the cinematic process and referred to in the section on Brakhage. Imaginary involvement is broken by devices such as the visible splice. However, Wollen goes on, modernism is associated with a transformation in the concept and use of the sign rather than in the rejection of any signification except tautology. To this extent anti-illusionism is compatible with the use of representation, which is not illusionistic when it is not used to create 'alternative worlds' in an unproblematic diegesis. As well as 'muting or excluding the non-cinematic codes' and 'reduction of the cinematic codes to their material substrate (optical, photochemical)', modernism can include the multiple-mapping procedures outlined by Sharits, what Brecht (and, it should be added, Lautreamont!) called plagiarism, and Kristeva's notion of intertextuality. These non-illusionist procedures create gaps, spaces, so that the 'illusory immediacy of reading is replaced by productive deciphering' (Wollen, 'Ontology', cit. p 13). The result is a 'destruction of the conscious (ie, self-conscious) subject in favour of a subject fissured and split by articulation with the order of the unconscious and his or her own body' (ibid). Kristeva ('The Ruin of a Poetics', *20th Century Studies*, 7/8, 1972) goes beyond a critique of the unitary order of the imaginary to question language and the symbolic realm. She defines discourse as the 'concept of a language which a speaker carries with him and/or of a speaker becoming himself within the language', as contrasted with the discursive in the modernist text where she traces 'the division of the language user . . . , a fragmenting of the "I"'. The modernist text is 'multiple and elusive, polyphonic . . . occupying an intertextual space'. The text is a 'territory in which instances of discourse confront each other, "I"s which speak . . . discourses in opposition'. In this plurivocity, the unitary speaker and subject are abolished 'in the intertextuality where the speaker becomes plural and fragmentary', as do 'the listeners, ourselves'. This division does not only shatter the semantic identity of the word as a linguistic unit [but also] the ideological identity of the utterance of the text . . . ie, the construction of a single ideology (with its own consistent identity)'. The 'polyphonic' text is an 'apparatus for exposing and exhausting ideologies in their confrontation' within the intertextual space.

Deke Dusinberre, in his article on Peter Gidal (*Screen* v 18 n 2, Summer 1977), which details the dissolution of the unified voice,

54 concludes that it is possible to 'posit a non-specific and fragmented artistic subject entering the complex social practice of image-making on film in a way which urgently engages the aesthetic subject in the process of meaning-making' (p 88). He quotes Anne Cottringer, also writing about Gidal: 'Perhaps the most radical aspiration of the avant-garde is the possibility that it offers of a different articulation of the subject, plucking she/he from their traditional unproblematic role' (*Afterimage*, 6, 1976, p 94).

Earlier I referred to certain avant-garde films which include language as an operative code, all of which put language in crisis. Wollen (art cit) refers to the way in which textual production transforms the artist 'into an agent who is working within language to make something which cannot be precisely preconceived, which must remain problematical and in a sense unfinished, interminable. This manufacture must not suppress its material substrate, the sensuous activity which is its process of production, but nor is that sensuous activity its own horizon'. What I have tried to show here is how another practice, not necessarily working on language directly, but based on the spectator and on codification in the acts of film making and viewing is also relevant to a radical conception of the cinematic subject and his/her constitutive work. It, too, attempts the act of fissuring the subject and of questioning – rather than referring to or using as a 'neutral' source – the sensuous activity and conditions of cinema. It goes, as Kristeva put it, 'through the mirror in the text'.

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Textual Space in 'Un Chien Andalou'

Phillip Drummond

Preface

Luis Buñuel's and Salvador Dalí's surrealist short, *Un Chien Andalou*, independently produced in France in 1929, should need little introduction for readers of a journal increasingly committed to an understanding of the varied cinemas of independence, of the avant-gardes. This will not simply be because, as Buñuel's biographer Francisco Aranda has rightly claimed, that few if any non-commercial films, and, one might add, few *short* films at that, have had such a 'triumphal' career, or attracted such a mixed range of critical attention.¹ Nor would it be because the film has, all too fleetingly, been invoked as a precursor of the American independent cinema, or as the fountain-head for surrealism in the commercial cinema, or, indeed, for cinematic modernism in general.² Still less would it be because of the more specialised and yet more evanescent celebrations of the film as 'the first film in the history of cinema to have attempted to use aggression as one of its structural components'; as the point of generic intersection, with *L'Age d'Or*, between 'film' and 'poetry'; as site of the evolution, in the cinema, of the *fantastique* towards the purely *merveilleux*; or as joint-source, with Cocteau, of specifically

1. Francisco Aranda, *Luis Buñuel: A Critical Biography*, edited by David Robinson, London, Secker & Warburg, 1975, p 63.

2. Respectively: Sheldon Renan, *An Introduction to the American Underground Film*, London, Studio Vista, 1968, p 21; *ibid*, p 51 and Len Masterman, 'Cul-de-Sac: Through the Mirror of Surrealism', *Screen*, v 11 n 6, Nov-Dec 1970, p 58; Lee R Bobker, *Elements of Film*, New York, Harcourt Brace & World, 1969, p 209.

Such honorific definitions merely mystify the film. Reified in these moments of commemoration and of *marketeering*, *Un Chien Andalou* becomes a mere canonical token, recuperated without effort into the film historian's repertory of knowing gesture. Assuming the textual homogeneity of *Un Chien Andalou*, and thus perhaps misunderstanding filmic potency, this competitive accumulation of criteria, of accolades, in fact only succeeds in cancelling the text to its presumed moments of historico-aesthetic impact and effect – the panache of its arrival, of its *coming* – and thus to a purely *punctual* omnipotence. When Jonas Mekas, father of one avant-garde, glimpses the title of the film outside a cinema in his romantic-impressionist *Diaries, Notebooks and Sketches* he in this sense focusses that lyric satisfaction with a name which constitutes the vanguard's reverential fascination with, yet uncomprehending distance from, *Un Chien Andalou* through half a century of film criticism.

In '*Un Chien Andalou*': *Text and Context*, the larger work-in-progress from which this article is drawn, I have attempted to confront in two main ways the adulatory reductivism of these all-too-familiar tendencies. By way of preface, I have provided a detailed examination of the increasingly voluminous critical literature which now surrounds, and threatens to displace, the film, in order to establish the 'positioning' of *Un Chien Andalou* within a series of film-cultural conjunctures. This contextualising area of the work thus goes some way towards the excavation of a 'classic' text from the encrustations of almost fifty years of 'orthodox' film criticism, precisely in order to disinter the premises of such a classicism. What such a survey unsurprisingly reveals, is the gross disfigurement, by *re-writing*, that the film has undergone, a re-writing based on factual error and proceeding ineluctably to the distortion of its politics, its eroticism, its stylistics, flattening this dynamic text into crude sub-Freudian and sub-Marxist socio-erotic allegory. This aspect of the work is seen as a tentative and preliminary contribution to the field of critical historiography, in its attempt to understand as one dimension of the social destiny of texts the film's several inscriptions within dominant critical ideologies.

In order to provide a more substantial basis for discussion of the film, I have also produced a detailed transcription and commentary, from which the present article is drawn, in its detailed

3. Respectively: Noel Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1973, p 125; Octavio Paz, 'The Tradition of a Fierce and Passional Art' (1951), in Kyrkou, *Luis Buñuel*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1963, p 186; Charles Pornon, *L'Ecran Merveilleux*, Paris, La Nef, 1959, p 109; Alessandro Cappabianca, 'Film: Segni e Strutture', in Della Volpe et al, *Teorie e prassi del cinema in Italia 1950-1970*, Milan, Mazzotta, 1972, p 183.

analysis of two segments of the film. Taking first of all the celebrated 'donkeys-and-pianos' scene (segment 7, shots 106-160), I attempt to work through some of the stages of the problems underlying the analysis of 'symbolic' images in film. I take the opportunity to illustrate the copious (and comic) forms of misrecognition which deform traditional discourse on this scene, and to criticise in particular an allegorical fallacy which reduces its complex imagery to mere symbolic ciphers. I go on to weigh the difficulties of traditional iconographic analysis in this connection, and to propose a more effective base for analysis in terms of an understanding of the codes of narrative and textual 'space' and to suggest that it is the interaction of these varied levels that determines the productivity of meaning in *Un Chien Andalou*.

My second case returns me to the so-called 'prologue' of the film, notorious, ironically, for the potency of its fictional *closure*. Here I challenge the only substantial analysis yet published on the film, Linda Williams's 'The Prologue to *Un Chien Andalou*: A Surrealist Film Metaphor',⁴ in order to argue for still greater syntactic complexity within the segment than previously recognised, particularly with reference to questions of 'subjectivity' and 'point-of-view'. I go on to discuss the hermeneutics of this segment in relation to the remainder of the film, particularly in terms of the inscription of the author and the place of the woman. This narrative microscopy again serves to criticise the *symbolising* and *globalising* tendencies of 'thematic' and of primitive psychoanalytic readings of the film, arguing that nothing could be less relevant in the face of such detailed intrication than the harmonising quest of another critical tradition for a global signified, stable and immutable, beyond the play of signifiers that form and block the passage of Buñuel's and Dali's text.

The surrealism of *Un Chien Andalou* is therefore not abandoned, as is traditionally the case, to the mysteries of an aestheticising discourse, but is shown as the material production of the film's specific play of difference, contradiction, fission and re-contextualisation. It is within this 'reflexive' textuality, goes the argument, that the film's surrealism must be henceforward located. Needless to add, it is this very textuality which challenges the suppositions founding the anecdotal authorism of the new central monument of Buñuel studies, the English publication in 1975, in a revised edition, of Francisco Aranda's *Luis Buñuel: A Critical Biography*, the crucial lure on which our introduction opened.

4. *Screen*, v 17 n 4, Winter 1976-7, pp 24-33.

1.1 PRODUCTION HISTORY An accurate production history for *Un Chien Andalou* has yet to be written. Progress so far has been impeded by the incompleteness of available data, by the competitive and therefore frequently mutually contradictory reminiscences of the two main authors, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí. The known facts and held opinions may be summarised as follows.⁵ The production context for this independently produced short film is the trajectory from Spain to Paris of its authors, from the Madrid avant-garde to the Parisian, at differing moments in the late 1920s. Whereas Dalí did not move permanently to Paris until the production period of *Un Chien Andalou* in early 1929, at the age of 23, for Buñuel, six years his senior, the film represents *one form of culmination* of a process of involvement with the French cinematic avant-garde dating back to his arrival from Madrid in 1925, the year following his graduation in philosophy and letters, sponsored it would seem, by Don Pedro Azcárate, later Ambassador to London, and with the promise of a job in the future 'International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation'.

Read back – with some difficulty, as we shall see – into the history of Buñuel's early period in Paris, *Un Chien Andalou* pro-

5. The information in this section is drawn largely from Aranda, op cit, where it is available in a more diffuse and scattered form. Aranda is also the source for references to Buñuel's correspondence and unpublished autobiography. I have supplemented Aranda with material from the following sources, listed here in the chronology of their publication: Buñuel and Dalí, 'Un Chien Andalou' (scenario), *La Révolution Surréaliste*, n 12, Dec 1929, pp 34-7 (available in an accessible English version in Buñuel, *L'Age d'Or and Un Chien Andalou*, London, Lorrimer, 1968, pp 85-92); Cyril Connolly (as 'Palinurus'), 'The Unquiet Grave' (1944) quoted in Buñuel and Dalí, op cit, p 82; Buñuel, 'Notes on the Making of Un Chien Andalou' in Stauffacher, ed, *Art in Cinema*, San Francisco, Museum of Modern Art, 1947, pp 29-30; Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, New York, Vision Press, 1948, 4th ed, 1973; Stan Brakhage, 'Metaphors on Vision', *Film Culture*, n 30, 1963, and in Sitney, ed, *Film Culture: an Anthology*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1971, p 224; Georges Sadoul, 'Souvenirs d'un Témoin', *Études Cinématographiques*, nn 38-9, Spring 1965, pp 19-28; Carlton Lake, *In Quest of Dalí*, New York, Putnam's, 1969; Roman Gubern, 'L'Exil de Buñuel à New York', *Positif*, n 146, Jan 1973, pp 6-13; Dalí, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dalí*, London, W. H. Allen, 1976; Randall Conrad, '“The Minister of the Interior is on the Telephone” – the Early Films of Luis Buñuel', *Cinéaste*, v 7 n 3, 1976, pp 2-14. A selection of Buñuel's literary and cinematic writings from the period, as discussed, can be found in Aranda, op cit, 'Anthology', Pt II, 'Buñuel as Critic', pp 265-75, and in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, n 223, Aug-Sept 1970, pp 18-23, which republishes, unlike Aranda, Buñuel's brief aesthetic essays, "‘Découpage’ ou Segmentation Cinématographique" (pp 18-20) and 'Du Plan Photogénique' (pp 21-3).

vides the point of *passing concretion* for a range of cinematic and theatrical activities. An early major breakthrough, thanks to his recommendation from Azcárate to the pianist Ricardo Viñas, was a job as scenic director on Manuel de Falla's opera, *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* – drawing on Buñuel's experience of amateur theatricals, and puppetry, at the University of Madrid – performed in Amsterdam in late April 1926. Buñuel's scenographic interests – apparently confirmed, according to the space of his autobiographic memory, by an encounter with Fritz Lang's *Destiny* – led him to an 'apprenticeship' at Jean Epstein's Cinema Academy, where he acted as assistant director on two productions, *Mauprat* (1926), in which he also appeared as an extra, and *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928). The relationship with Epstein – intercepted by Buñuel's work on the Nalpas/Etiévant film *The Siren of the Tropics* (1927), which was to introduce Buñuel to the talents of both Pierre Batcheff and Albert Dubergen, both recalled for *Un Chien Andalou* – terminated with Buñuel's audacious rejection of the chance of a niche as assistant director on Gance's *Napoleon*, a masterpiece which Buñuel went on, just as outrageously, to publicly decry on its release.

Scenic direction for the opera, and work for Epstein, meshed with Buñuel's work as a film critic and as a programme organiser. In late 1927 he became film critic and cinema editor for both the Spanish magazine *La Gaceta Literaria Hispanoamericana* and the in mid-March 1928, apparently over a dispute concerning Buñuel's Parisian journal *Les Cahiers d'Art* – the latter soon terminating passion for American cinema. Buñuel's cinematic writings for these journals, and occasionally elsewhere, fall into three main categories. There are, predominantly, reviews of discrete films or film-programmes – *Rien que les Heures*, *Greed*, *Metropolis*, *Joan of Arc*, *Camille*, *Napoleon*, *College*, *The Way of all Flesh* – general comment, in the form of ruminations on Menjou's trip to Paris, 'Variations upon the Moustache of Menjou', or a spoof gossip column, 'News from Hollywood (the Latest)'; and more ambitious aesthetic essays – 'On the Photogeny of the Shot', and '"Découpage" or Cinematographic Segmentation'. Limited in format, these texts obey no specific theoretical programme, although certain themes began to gain momentum. These include Buñuel's polemical preference for American over European cinema (crystallising in his attitude to Keaton in the *College* review, as discussed below); unresolved tensions over the importance of naturalism as against aestheticism in the cinema, and over the differing merits of the purely visual continuity of avant-garde work versus the literary armature of the mainstream 'cinedrama'; the importance of photogeny, a concept perhaps deriving from the work with Epstein, and the interest in 'segmentation', perhaps in response to the Russian montage cinema of the period.

Buñuel's critical activity was undertaken alongside related work

60 in the fields of film production and film activism. From Paris he continued to organise in Madrid a number of film screenings which led to the establishment, in 1928, of the Cineclub Español, fostered by the magazine *La Gaceta Literaria* and a formative influence upon the development of independent and vanguard Spanish film culture in the 1930s. Buñuel's interests as a programmer in this period, at the Cineclub Español and elsewhere, range from a specialist preoccupation with slow-motion cinematography to a polemical re-definition of cinematic surrealism in terms of classic film comedy. The critic and activist was not slow to develop aspirations as a film-maker following the 'apprenticeship' with Epstein and with Nalpas/Etiévant. Letters to friends between July 1927 and August 1928 chronicle a flurry of fretful and unachieved ambitions in the sphere of film-production. A variety of unexplicated half-chances, 'certainties', and mysterious failures, issue in just two firm projects: the impending purchase of Buñuel's 'Goya Treatment' for 4,500 pesetas by the Julio César company, and the setting up of what would appear to have been about to become his first film, *Los Caprichos*, a six-story omnibus written by Buñuel's favoured collaborator, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, which was to have started shooting with an unnamed Paris company in Autumn 1928, on 25,000 pesetas of Buñuel's own money. What became of either of these projects is unclear, but what is known is that they were quickly overtaken and eclipsed by the rapid conception, production and exhibition, in early 1929, of Buñuel's first completed film, *Un Chien Andalou*. Seemingly consuming the finance intended for *Los Caprichos*, *Un Chien Andalou* was scripted, shot, edited during the first quarter of the year, enabling it to be premiered at the Studio Ursulines in April – stormily, according to Cyril Connolly's account – prior to its public run at Studio 28 during the Autumn of 1929. Here, recuperated for the first time by crucial if comically fickle opportunism, it was belatedly discovered and espoused by the 'official' surrealist group – who, until Breton caught up with the film in time, had been bent upon denunciation of its uncertified reputation as a surrealist work. To this vibrant if confused galaxy, currently undergoing a late phase of its own internal recombinations, Buñuel and Dali, embarking on another history, were shortly recruited.

Buñuel's proposed collaboration with Ramón Gómez de la Serna was displaced by cooperation with the painter, Salvador Dali, whom Buñuel had come to know while he (though not Dali) had been a student at the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid. From correspondence it would appear that Buñuel spent a fortnight at Dali's home in Figueras sometime between January and mid-February 1929, so immersed in the success of their joint productivity that he was able to bring forward the start of shooting on the film to March. Buñuel's initial idea for a newspaper story – probably *El Mundo por diez centimos*, first worked on with Ramón

Gómez de la Serna – Dali has recalled rejecting as naive and sentimental. Instead, they put together a scenario variously entitled *El Marista de la Ballesta*, *Défense de se pencher dehors* and even *Défense de se pencher dedans*, before finally being called *Un Chien Andalou* after Buñuel's first anthology of poems. Dali's claim that he presented Buñuel with a complete alternative scenario, scribbled in a quarter of an hour on a shoe-box, is countered by Buñuel's memory of the scenario's construction morning-by-morning at Figueras from shared memories of dream-residues, or of spontaneously invoked gags and objects, a concoction resolutely shorn of 'conscious' associations. Buñuel has wavered between dividing 'responsibility' for this 'automatic' scenario equally between himself and Dali, and assigning to his co-scenarist only the donkeys-and-pianos segment discussed below more fully. The latter is certainly the segment of the film Dali remembers best, and on which he appears to have been most involved during production. Stress on the 'automaticity' of the writing of *Un Chien Andalou* – at odds, as we shall see in a moment, with the conscious care of the production process itself – has, inevitably, deeply problematised attempts to rationalise and 'place' the film historically and aesthetically. The only authorial commentary of any prominence, no less problematic in these terms, occurs in Buñuel's 1929 preface to the first publication of the scenario, and, at the ominous remove of almost two decades, in his 1947 *Notes on the Making of 'Un Chien Andalou'*.

Strikingly absent from these laconic and impressionistic formulations is any reference to the overt 'structure' of the work, which can be summarised – to be extended in the following analyses – as a partly narrative/dramatic romantic tragicomedy, complete with an embattled hero and heroine, perpetually unsettled and undermined by a repertory of disintegrative surrealist formalities and protocols. The preface and the *Notes* offer more ambitious, and more cloudy, contexts for the film. In the former, no more than a brief note, Buñuel confirms his adherence to surrealism, and takes the opportunity to attack those spectators who, recuperating the film as 'beautiful' and 'poetic', overlooked its true intention as 'a desperate and passionate appeal to murder'. The glib terrorism of this finale is mollified in the *Notes*, but the general project of the film is made little clearer, as, with a kind of threadbare verve, Buñuel circulates a contextualising terminology involving concepts of 'automaticity', 'the unconscious', 'the poetic', 'the spectator', and 'the avant-garde'. Here Buñuel stresses the 'automaticity' of the film's creation, an automaticity cancelling 'rational', 'aesthetic' and 'technical' considerations, together with those of 'customary morality', and points to the fact that *Un Chien Andalou* does not recount a dream but itself 'profits by a mechanism analogous to dreams'. The nature of this (singularised) mechanism is unclear,

62 but the aesthetic consequence is that the film is therefore able to draw upon putatively 'liberated' psychic impulses, formally deployed as 'poetic' constructs, rather than as 'intended' symbols. In this sense the film is taken as the mark of the cinema maker's first production on 'a purely POETICAL-MORAL plane' where 'moral' is taken to be the governing agent in 'dreams or parasympathetic compulsions'. The shadowy itinerary from the 'unconscious' to the 'poetic' then enables Buñuel to re-write the history of the contemporary cinema. Since the work is thus marked by deliberately 'anti-plastic' and 'anti-artistic' concerns, it can be seen as 'a violent reaction' against contemporary avant-garde cinema, characterised by Buñuel as typically directed 'exclusively to the artistic sensibility and to the reason of the spectator, with its play of light and shadow, its photographic effects, its preoccupation with rhythmic montage and technical research, and at times in the direction of the display of a perfectly conventional and reasonable mood'. Homogenising 'documentary' and 'abstract' cinema, Buñuel assigns this tendency to the work of Ruttmann, Cavalcanti, Man Ray, Dziga Vertov, Clair, Dulac and Ivens.

The construction of 'traditions' and of 'interventions' calls for greater care than this, especially when the work of at least one of the directors here explicitly attacked – Cavalcanti's *Rien que les Heures* – had previously elicited Buñuel's warmest praise and understanding as a reviewer. Ironically, many of the tendencies Buñuel is attacking here are those obviated in *Un Chien Andalou* not by 'unconscious' creativity but by reversion to a pseudo-classical narrative-dramatic armature for the text; 'unconscious' film-making in fact produces the very 'avant-garde' formalism Buñuel is here challenging, as is clearly demonstrated by Brakhage's experiments with the *Prelude to Dog Star Man*, recalled in terms of mistaken knowledge of the generation of *Un Chien Andalou*. Notions of the film's potential effectivity are also dogged by misconceptions. Thus, with familiar surrealist idealism, and contradicting the stated thesis of 'unconscious' creativity, the film makes 'systematic use of the poetic image as an arm to overthrow accepted notions'; the formal device is shorn from its place in the textual ensemble. Imagined as its ability to dialecticise the conventional spectatorial process of identification, provoking in the spectator 'instinctive reactions of attraction and repulsion', the general effectivity of the film is equally misrecognised. It was to require a more measured commentary on *Un Chien Andalou*, and a less allusive final flourish in the direction of psychoanalysis, to account for the poetics of *Un Chien Andalou*.

First published in the final number of *La Révolution Surréaliste* in December 1929, the scenario very closely anticipates the completed film, even though the 'automaticity' of script-writing, idealised and mystified in authorial adumbrations, is thrown into sharp relief by the extreme care and rigour with which Buñuel

approached the process of production itself, at Billancourt in Paris, and at Le Havre. The spontaneism of 'unconscious' creativity was now displaced by the 'conscious' rigours of the shooting schedule, Buñuel claiming to have gone to work painstakingly as though for an 'historical' film, scene by scene, on a shooting ratio of 3:1. Finance, to the tune of 25,000 pesetas, appears to have come from Buñuel's mother – presumably the amount, as stated, originally set aside for a previous project. We know nothing of the editing of *Un Chien Andalou*, but Buñuel has claimed that special effects were all achieved in camera rather than in process-work (though this can hardly have been the case for the effect of grain in segment 10). The contribution of Buñuel's collaborators is difficult to assess. Dali claims to have kept in close touch with the production through nightly conversations with a deferential Buñuel, but seems to have been active in the studio only for the donkeys-and-pianos segment discussed below. In seeming contradiction with Buñuel's claim that Dali was only present, for this scene, on the last day of shooting, is photographic evidence tacitly establishing Dali's presence at Le Havre and hence, presumably, at an earlier stage of shooting. Only two actors are credited, Simone Mareuil and Pierre Batcheff (with whom Buñuel had worked on *The Siren of the Tropics*). But the film plays insistently with variants on the two central characters, as we discuss below more fully. The actorial identity of the woman with the severed hand (segment 6) and the 'new' lover (segment 13) is therefore difficult to establish. There are uncredited acting 'cameos' by Buñuel himself (as the man with the razor in the 'prologue') and by Dali and the Catalan anarchist Jaime Miratvilles (who are traditionally assumed to have played the two priests in segment 7, although closer examination of these fleeting appearances suggests that, in a typical discontinuity, there may well be three actors involved in the creation of the 'two' screen roles). The only technical credit for *Un Chien Andalou* goes to the cinematographer Albert Dubergen (Duverger), who had also worked with Buñuel and Batcheff on *The Siren of the Tropics*, while the repeated 'play' on decor analysed below more fully points to the necessary if presently impossible clarification of the work of decorator Pierre Schilzneck, to whom this aspect of *Un Chien Andalou* is traditionally assigned. Extras, for the street and park scenes, appear to have been rounded up in a local café.

The 'production history' of *Un Chien Andalou* finds no simple context, therefore, within historicist and geneticist ideas of 'authorship'. The part-spontaneous, part-calculated product of a dual authorship, it cannot be read back into its 'period' except via the troubled labyrinth we have sketched in. Its 'independence' must therefore be thought within these various parameters. In terms of aesthetic production, its 'independence' is caught up within the problematic over 'conscious' versus 'unconscious'

64 creativity, and the resulting intersection between production of the *scenario* and production of the *film*; it is independent to this degree of its 'authors', without firm anchorage either in the professional trajectory of Buñuel, or, as we shall see in section 11.3, the Dalian iconographic 'pool'; its *economic* independence stems from the phenomenon of *private sponsorship*, deriving from as close a source as the author's 'family connections'; in terms of *distribution* and *exhibition*, the film is thus 'vouchsafed', and can therefore embark without peril upon the normally precarious trajectory of the 'short' film (although the 'two-reeler', as Buñuel consciously saw *Un Chien Andalou*, enjoyed a more privileged status within film-exhibition patterns than today, as is suggested by the film's early opportunity for a public run). For its authors, the film marks a cultural and social *immigration* (Spain – France), and a clear *entrée* (into Parisian surrealism). Specifically, it is the work which is Buñuel's route to feature-film production (*L'Age d'Or*, in 1930) and a stepping-stone in Dali's rapid rise to celebrity and notoriety as a surrealist painter (his first Paris exhibition, at the Goemans Gallery, coinciding with a late stage in the public run of *Un Chien Andalou*).

Fittingly, for a film preoccupied with processes of transformation, the production history of *Un Chien Andalou* does not stop short in 1929. In 1960 the film enters a new stage in its textual and social history. At this point it passes into the domain of Raymond Rohauer, key exploiter of the silent cinema, who is presumably responsible for the addition of the musical accompaniment (under Buñuel's supervision, recreating the 1929 gramophone accompaniment), perhaps in order to obtain renewal of the copyright. In terms of British film culture, it still remains caught between the 'credit' of its aesthetic pedigree, and the drawback of its lack of a public certificate – enhancing its notoriety but problematising its availability – which it finally receives, after almost forty years of clandestinity, in 1968, when it is deemed suitable for 'adult' audiences. In this period the notoriety of its 'excessive' surrealism is perhaps mollified in retrospect by Buñuel's increasingly notable 'centering' within mainstream European 'art-film' culture, a positioning supported by the auteurist Buñuel vogue synchronising with the explosively humanistic 'triumph' of *Viridiana* in the early 1960s. Initiating this long momentum, in this period the brevity of *Un Chien Andalou* also bears the larger burden of 'representing' the early Buñuel thanks to the almost continuous unavailability, because of copyright problems, of his key feature of the early period, *L'Age d'Or*.

1.2 NOTES ON THE TEXTUAL SYSTEM OF UN CHIEN ANDALOU Although this is not the place to provide a detailed study of the overall textual system of *Un Chien Andalou*, certain indications may be useful in order to locate more clearly the segments for close

analysis, here detached in all their surprising *eccentricity*. In 65
 general terms, as these analyses show more fully, *Un Chien Andalou* conspicuously avoids the traditional textual apparatus of the mainstream narrative film – what we might summarise as its ‘classic realism’ – and yet does not relapse into the embryonic ‘abstractionism’ or ‘structuralism’ of the contemporary French avant-garde, against which Buñuel and Dali were equally and consciously reacting. Rather, the film mixes credentials from these two streams of influence, and is thus a film which is of interest precisely as a ‘turning point’ between the alternatives of ‘dominant’ and ‘counter’ cinema. What may be briefly characterised at this stage of analysis are the film’s definition of ‘character’, and its structuring of dominant and subsidiary ‘character relationships’, the typicalities of its spatio-temporal organisation, its hermeneutic play on ‘character’/‘object’ interaction, and the varying relationships between the picture and sound tracks.

Thus, for instance, *Un Chien Andalou* in part depends upon a central male-female character relationship, played out by its two named stars, Batcheff and Mareuil, but their characters do not have names, and are psychologically and physiologically inconsistent – which is why they are coded abstractly as A and B respectively in Figure 1. The Batcheff character, for instance, appears in three ‘states’ in the course of the film: as ‘himself’ (B 2), as his ‘double’ (B 3), and as a cyclist in maid’s costume (B 1). While the relationship between the two main characters centres on the woman’s resistance to the man’s ministrations and attempted seduction, the sexual progress of the narrative is initiated *indirectly*, by a series of obscure gifts and visions (the delivery of a mysterious box, in segment 3; the woman’s mourning over the cyclist’s disembodied costume, in segment 4; the couple’s ‘vision’ of a subsidiary character through gazing at a hand filled with ants, in segment 4; the hero’s burden of corks, melons, priests and pianos drawn towards the heroine, in segment 7) and subsides into fantastic physical competition, the hero erasing his own mouth and replacing it with hair magically transferred from the armpit of the heroine (segment 12), before culminating in the shock of the couple’s unexplicated burial, up to the waist, in an insect-infested desert landscape (segment 14). It is in any case a ‘conclusion’ whose narrative surprise is further inflected by the more than momentary and crucial difficulty posed, by the spatial depth of the shot, over recognising the male figure as the ‘main’ protagonist rather than the ‘new’ lover of the previous segment. In the context of such aberrances, it comes as no surprise that the couple, no more than any other characters within the film, are hardly ever seen to speak, even through the intertitles of the silent version, which instead convey not the intra-diegetic language of the character-system, but the laconic and misleading time-

UN CHIEN-ANDALOU

Time	SHOTS		Total	TITLES		CHARACTERS						MUSIC	
	Segment No.	Shots Span		Legend	Woman (A)	Cyclist (B1)	Man (B2)	Double (B3)	Subsidiary Characters (C1 - C8)	Tangos 1	Wagner 2		
00' 00"	A*	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	*			
00' 04"	B	i-vi	-	MAIN TITLE AND CREDIT TITLES	-	-	-	-	-	X			
01' 01'	1	1-13	1	'ONCE UPON A TIME ...'	X				C1 : MAN WITH RAZOR	X			
01' 43"	2	14-24	2	'EIGHT YEARS LATER'		X					X	X	
02' 16"	3	25-44			X	X						X	
03' 13"	4	45-63			X		X					X	
04' 27"	5	64-5							C2 : SUNBATHER'S TORSO			X	
04' 35"	6	66-105			X		X		C3 : WOMAN WITH SEVERED HAND			X	
06' 28"	7	106-160			X		X		C4 : CROWD & GENDARMES			X	
08' 49"	8	161-175			X		X		C5 : PASSERS-BY			X	
09' 23"	9	176-213	3	'TOWARDS THREE IN THE MORNING'	X		X	X	C6 : TWO PRIESTS		X		
10' 50"	10	214-241	4	'SIXTEEN YEARS BEFORE'			X	X				X	
12' 08"	11	242-259						X	C7 : STROLLERS IN PARK			X	
13' 30"	12	260-286			X		X			X			
14' 25"	13	287-300			X				C8 : NEW LOVER ON BEACH	X			
15' 51"	14	301-303	5	'IN THE SPRING'	X		X			X			
16' 18"													

* ie, film commences on 4 in of music-track over darkened screen

† Wagner features on the music-track - in opposition to a pair of Argentinian tangos - in the form of the *Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde* (which we hear in its entirety in the course of the film), and not the Prelude, as the English sub-titles mistakenly claim:

Shots 14-mid-110, beginning to 3rd beat of bar 65;

Shots 213-259, 4th beat of bar 48 to end.

icks provided by the authorial 'voice'.

The 'hero', in his various states, most clearly exceeds the parameters of traditional *characterisation*. As himself, he can produce a swarm of ants out of a hole in the centre of his palm (shots 61, 63, 165, 166, 168), can produce from 'nowhere' a grotesque conglomeration of corks, melons, priests and pianos arising dead and rotting donkeys, bound together with huge ropes (segment 7, discussed below more fully), can transform hool-books, thanks to a jump-cut, into murderous revolvers (shots 228-9), can erase his mouth and replace it with the under-m hair of the woman he is seeking to impress (shots 276-9). As his 'double', he can traverse 'impossible' distance, bedroom to park, all in a dying fall (shots 241-2). These quasi-magical abilities conferred upon the protagonist are linked to the film's obsessiveurring of the frontiers of the human form: the eye of the heroine, closed with a razor in the 'prologue' and yet intact in the remainder of the film; the severed hand cherished by the woman in the street (segment 6); the torso of the heroine dissolving into naked breasts and then into naked buttocks under the hero's only 'successful' caress (shots 114-126); a pair of priests turned into material lumber and the two roles probably shared out between at least three actors (shots 150, 154); the naked woman in the park, dissolving into invisibility upon a touch from the hero's 'double' (shots 243-7); the couple cut in half by burial up to the waist in the desert of the final shot; a chain of severed or seemingly autonomous hands eerily punctuating the film (shots 1, 61, 63; segment 7, *passim*; 179, 181). The film's 'body consciousness',

in other words, is permitted and encouraged to explode the additional 'containment' of psychological-dramatic continuity and logic in *Un Chien Andalou*.

In addition to the 'instability' of the central character-axis, subsidiary characters are interpolated into the relationship without overt internal logic and without fictional contextualisation. The film thus opens with a 'prologue' in which the heroine'-to-be encounters a man who, in addition to inflicting mysterious injury upon her (with her collusion), will not reappear in the remainder of the film; the central 'couple' will be interrupted by the view from their window of a second woman, in the street below, preoccupied with a severed hand and run over by a car as she day-dreams (segment 6); the hero will be visited by his 'double', whom he shoots dead and who falls dying, by an impossible cross-cut, in parkland, clutching at the averted body of a naked woman who herself disappears at his touch (shots 229-47); as late as the penultimate segment of the film, the 'heroine' will, without warning, encounter a new lover who, lacking the aberrant time-structure of the film, will indicate his displeasure at what would appear to be, for him, her 'late' rival, and who will be immediately jettisoned for the film to end

68 on a different surprise again. The shifting perpetuity of the central character-relationship is thus played off against the insertion of subsidiary character encounters which are in each case contained completely by the space of their insertions, disqualified from progression further into the body of the text.

The flexibility of this 'structure', in which conventional and psychological naturalism, together with dramatic 'logic', have been displaced, naturally pervades the spatio-temporal vectorisation of that structure. If obedient to the presumed authority of inter-titles, for instance, the film would appear to be sectioned into five main temporally definite passages, but these inter-titles fluctuate precisely between extreme specificity and extreme generality: 'Once upon a time . . .' (shot 1); 'Eight years later' (shot 14); 'Towards three in the morning' (shot 176); 'Sixteen years before' (shot 214); 'In the spring . . .' (shot 300). They also divide the film into extremely varying lengths – fourteen shots (titles 1-2), one hundred and sixty-two shots (2-3), thirty-eight shots (3-4), eighty-seven shots (4-5), two shots (5-end) – while one of them, 'Sixteen years before', seems to punctuate a larger continuous segment rather than initiating a new segment of its own (shot 214, intervening in the hero's confrontation with his 'double', segments 9-11, shots 176-289), pointing to the irregularity of this form of segmentation in the film as a whole.⁶ Other principles of segmentation suggest a larger number of coherent segments in the film, still varying in scope and length (see Figure 1 and the concluding remarks in this section). Thus the 'prologue' is extremely difficult to read as an 'introduction' to the film, as we discuss below more fully, while a later segment, following the death of the hero's 'double', and focussing attention for some time on his parkland cortege, appears to be about to 'close' the film, only for the film to 'start' again, the prepossessing intrusion of the 'double' thus contextualised *in retrospect* as a momentary displacement of the central 'axis'. When the film finally succeeds in ending, after just over three hundred shots in little more than sixteen minutes, it does so via an image totally deprived, like the 'prologue', of logical 'connection' and 'explanation' within the body of the film.⁷

6. As Michel Marie observes, the intertitles of *Un Chien Andalou* may be seen as parodying the use of intertitles in the silent cinema in their revelation of 'the congealed aspect [l'aspect figé] of a certain kind of rhetorical scansion of temporal durations' ('Muet', in Marie et al, *Lectures du Film*, Paris, Eds Albatros, 1976, p 171).

7. Attempts to provide any kind of structural analysis of *Un Chien Andalou* have previously gone little further than, in order of increasing arithmetical complexity: Noel Burch's discovery in the film of a bipartite structure, hinged on the sliced eye of shot 13, transforming empirically received 'aggression' into a 'structural component' both for the film, and for Burch's book *Theory of Film Practice*, where it

The diegetic space of *Un Chien Andalou* is as perturbed as its temporal organisation. Locations, for instance, accumulate *discretely*, by a process of *simple addition* rather than by reflexive systems of re-permutation and re-cycling. Emblematic in this respect is the final location, the desert sprouting half-buried acquaintances, introduced for the first time in what is in effect the film's closing shot. More striking still is the example of the bedroom and the balcony which provide the location for the 'prologue', which only serve to underline the extreme hermeneutic/proairetic enigmas of the segment when, like its first 'character' (the man with the razor), this location never reappears, except via *parallels* – the bedroom which stages the main action, the window through which the street-scene will be watched at length and the cyclist's clothing hurled. The principles of discontinuity and segmentation we have been noting at the level of character- and temporal formation in *Un Chien Andalou* are thus repeated at the level of the introduction and expulsion of locations, a principle which operates not only on the large scale but at the level of disorientation of individual objects and actions. As is discussed below, there is, in the 'prologue', no clear 'location' for a major character, the woman, when she appears, in facial close-ups only – in shots which may in fact be therefore understood as the 'imaginary' or 'subjective' sights of the temporary protagonist, the man with the razor, rather than denoting her 'real' presence at this stage of the diegesis. Similarly, the pair of hands which activate a cocktail-shaker instead of a door-bell when the hero's 'double' pays a visit (shots 177-81) are not only 'surreal' along the axis of semantic substitution, but the more so in their lack of an overall spatial location – floating between mere narrative association with the caller in the doorway (shots 177-8) and with the face of the 'host', itself increasingly dis-located in the previous segment. These shots are thus, in other words, *almost* 'de-realised' to the status of virtual metaphoric inserts. Even more striking will be the use of a fused pair of autonomous shots – dissolving together a sunbather's armpit and

constructs a chapter of its own (Pt. III, ch 8, espec pp 124-5); Roy Armes' perception of a 'deliberate structure', where unrecorded intentionality is invented in order to construct a tripartite structure made up of a prologue, an epilogue, and a telescoped central section from which an inter-title has gone missing (*Film and Reality*, Penguin, 1974, p 188); Pierre Renaud's abandoned attempt to count the film's segments according to more than merely inter-titles ('Un Symbolisme au Second Degré: *Un Chien Andalou*', in *Etudes Cinématographiques*, nn 22-3, Spring 1963, pp 147-57); and François Piazza's decomposition of the film into eight 'sequences', which repressively installs the scenario as substance for analysis, all the more repressive in the textual suppressions entailed by the new *découpage* of the written text ('Considérations Psychanalytiques sur le "*Chien Andalou*" de Luis Buñuel et Salvador Dalí', *Psyché* (Paris), nn 27-8, Jan-Feb 1949, pp 147-56).

70 a sea-urchin accompanied by a single human footprint – previously ‘unprepared’ by the film and installing a geographic location both difficult to construe (the seashore?) and one recovered and recontextualised only by the later beach-scene (segment 13), where these ‘anticipations’ (shots 64/5) significantly do not reappear.

This play on spatio-temporal ‘standards’ is apparent even when the location appears to be fixed and ‘given’, as in the case of the film’s main setting, the bedroom, supremely so when it disbursts, as we analyse below, the most unusual of bedroom ‘properties’ – corks, melons, priests, donkeys and pianos, hauled on ropes (segment 7). A number of symptoms may be collected to summarise this tendency. Firstly, as in the case just cited, and as followed through more fully in analysis, distinctions between ‘diegetic’ and ‘narrative’ space may be thoroughly confused, the filmic chain unfolding what the diegesis never could. Second, distinctions between interior and exterior may be blurred partly by an emphasis on the power of eyesight to bridge distances (a trope central to the ‘prologue’ and to the couple’s interest in the scene down in the street below their building (segment 6)), partly by the defiant continuity of actions across cuts between widely separated spaces. A well-known example of this tendency would be that of the death of the ‘double’, who collapses in the bedroom, shot down by the ‘hero’, only to fall to the ground in an as yet unIntroduced lakeside park, where two members of his cortege will join the party by walking off uninterested in the opposite direction in the previous shot (shots 254-5). In an equally earth-shrinking and segment-binding cut, the woman storms out of the bedroom straight on to a seashore (shots 286-7), itself impossibly including a house and garden in the background of only one of the shots in the segment (shot 292). A subtler version of this tendency is represented by an apparently straightforward ABA series of point-of-view shots, where the look of the woman brings an image of the cyclist opposite her room, and on a level with it, even though the cyclist has not yet reached the building, and although the apartment is situated on at least the first floor above street-level, as subsequent high-angle shots quite clearly prove (26-28, 32, 34, 36). This is also the context in which, not merely unsettling but contradicting spatial co-ordinates, point-of-view shots may be subverted to the point of complete inversion (32, 34 versus 36). The interior of the room is thus ‘exposed’ to other spaces and perspectives. Most conspicuously, it will somehow, to the surprise even of the characters, find space to produce, as though out of thin air, the monstrous burden hauled by the protagonist towards his love-object in a segment analysed in detail later (segment 7). Just as conspicuously, it is a room which, once escaped, can spawn a double, as the heroine finds to her dismay once she escapes the donkeys and pianos (segment 8), a room which, causing only her second absence from the fiction, can erase

her on her way to open a door, so that it opens as though 'automatically' to a visitor (shots 183-4). It is a room in which – considerably in advance of the wily sleight-of-hand of Ozu or of the magically mobile throne of King Sigismund in the opening moments of Eisenstein's *The Boyars' Plot* – the furniture and fittings will seemingly move around at will, unbalancing spatial relationships within what has appeared to be a fixed and confined arena (see shots 55, 56, 58, 59, 60). This clear determination to contest the status of the 'diegetic' by the 'filmic', to expose the movement of *énonciation*, is conspicuously supported by the film's play with such effects as superimposition (shot 22), jump-cuts and dissolves creating 'magical' intra-iconic metamorphoses (49-50, 52-3, 228-9), irises and dissolves making pictorial-conceptual 'bridges' between shots and segments (the series 63-8 *in toto*) or enacting seemingly 'subjective' vision while retaining 'objective' angles of view (shots 117-25), slow-motion and grain (215-20, 224-5, 234-41), flash-framing within 'continuous' action (47), compositions, camera-angles and shot-lengths emphasising the pictorial and spatial materiality of the frame 'itself' (for example, in shots 27, 36, 83, 89, 104).

Displaced from the periphery to the centre of the film, extra-human objects and phenomena preoccupy the textual space of *Un Chien Andalou* but without becoming separable, as ciphers, from that textuality – as, our contention follows shortly, the majority of critics misassumed to their cost, in claiming for the film a simplified mode of symbolic discourse. Rather, these objects are themselves constrained by the film's elaborate codic play. The striped box is one such famous shifting signifier, the dissolve to it as the cyclist arrives early in the film (shot 23), and the subsequent fade, implying its centrality to his otherwise unexplained errand. Following his accident, indeed, the box will indeed move its position twice, automatically, to match equally automatic changes in his unconscious prostration (40, 42). But at this point the box begins to evade these hermeneutic 'markings'. When we dissolve to it again in close-up in shot 45, it may be assumed that it has retained the centrality of its purpose in the cyclist's mission, yet it will in fact merely divulge a tie alongside which it will take its place in the reconstructed costume-skeleton of the cyclist on the bed (shots 45-8). The rainstorm specified by the scenario for the dissolve between the street and the interior stressed the coinciding diagonals of rain, the box, the wrapping paper, and the tie; within the finished film this new dissolve, marking a scenic transition from street to house, only serves to blur the substantive connotations imposed upon the box by its previous closure of a segment (23). Once it was a climax, now it is a pretext. From now on it is as a deceptive hermeneutic *lure* that it will operate. It will disappear without comment from the interior, and when an identical box is used by the woman in the

72 street to contain the severed hand, it will be unclear, given the film's appetite for 'doubling', whether it is the same box or another. Here again, its links with the 'characters' will be made ambiguous; in the space of the three shots in which the woman is run down (100-102) the position of the box will move, again without explanation, backwards and forwards between her arms and the ground at her feet. Once again abandoned with the disappearance of the 'character', the box reappears, unexplained, on the shoreline of the penultimate segment, together with the cyclist's accoutrements thrown from the building into the street in an intervening segment (10), but *which* box, if there is more than one, is once again unclear, and once again defeating the expected connotations – perhaps connoting the 'remnants' of the previous suitor, whom the heroine has now apparently successfully 'exchanged'? – it leads to the immediate disappointment of the new relationship, returning the central couple, in the briefest of final segments, to unexpected and therefore *inexplicable* interment in the desert, 'wilfully' closing the film on a conundrum worthy, in an uncanny circularity, of the film's 'beginning'.

The nature of the sound-track for *Un Chien Andalou*, recreated, in 1960, in an archival gesture commemorating Buñuel's original gramophone accompaniment, further complicates structural analysis of the film, and considerations on the 'reality-status' of its aesthetic strategies. The musical accompaniment, based on a binary opposition between Wagnerian romanticism (the *Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde*) and popular South American dance-music (a pair of Argentinian tangos), internally patterned via alternation and repetition, will, on the whole, both 'permit' the segmental suppositions underlying the present analysis, but will at the same time also 're-group' larger segments in the film than those here described (basically speaking, five: 1) 1-13; 2) 14-110; 3) 110-213; 4) 214-259; 5) 260-303). Although thus equal in number to the segments formed by the chain of inter-titles, these are different again in shape and size. In its displacement of dialogue, even when characters are, very occasionally, seen to 'speak' within the diegesis (see shots 106-107; 229, 232; 275), the music, at its own level of abstraction, both 'supports' and 'undermines' the image-track. The music for the death of Isolde will thus 'match' the depicted deaths of two of the characters – the woman in the street (segment 4), and the hero's 'double' (segments 10 and 11). But, ironically, the major rather than the subsidiary characters will enjoy no such musical reinforcement. The hero's pursuit of the heroine can thus be satirised by a tango (shots 110-114), while, in a further gesture of distancing and separation, it is the light-hearted vigour of the tango which will cover the gloomy slitting of the heroine's eye in the 'prologue', and her interment, with the hero, at the end of the film, thus opening and closing the film on inscrutably violent events further mystified by the ap-

parent 'nonchalance' of the musical accompaniment. By 'doubling' pro-filmic closure – the *Liebestod* ending on the fading of the 'double's' cortege in segment 11 – the music-track can, equally deceptively, appear to close a film which will immediately recommence, its Wagnerian sentiment displaced by the tango which will in fact see the film through the three remaining segments to its 'true' finale.

II. 'Donkeys and Pianos'

II.1 INTRODUCTION (2) In view of the textual convolutions we have already outlined, it should come as no surprise if to speak of this surrealist scene is to speak against another scene of surreal misapprehension played out by previous discourse on *Un Chien Andalou*. One highly-placed recent commentator, for instance, summarises the momentum of these difficulties when, although he claims familiarity with Ogden and Richards's contemporary philosophic treatise, *The Meaning of Meaning*, he can at the same time assert that the two pianos in this scene contain 'respectively', as though more specifically, not two donkeys, but a donkey and a deer.⁸ But then authorities still greater have been equally confused. Although he almost corrects himself elsewhere, no less an historian than Jean Mitry continues to remember not horse-meat, but beef, atop an apparently solitary piano⁹ – perhaps misled by fellow French historians Bardèche and Brasillach, who, two decades prior to his first mistake, saw the same solitary instrument bearing veal.¹⁰ This may have come about because they over-remembered the 'singularising' close-ups of shots 146 and 153, although this would of course render still more inex-

8. Geoffrey Wagner refers to 'Un Chien Andalou' and to 'The Meaning of Meaning' on the same page of his book *The Novel and the Cinema*, London, Tantivy, 1975, p. 94.

9. Mitry errs in *Histoire du Cinéma Muet*, Paris, Eds Universitaires, 1973, v 3, p. 349, tacitly corrects himself on pp. 483-4 by cross-referring to the horse on the piano in McCarey's 1929 Laurel and Hardy vehicle, *Wrong Again*, but reverts to his original error in *Le Cinéma Expérimental*, Paris, Seghers, 1974, p. 152.

10. Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach, *The History of Motion Pictures*, New York, W. W. Norton & the Museum of Modern Art, 1938, p. 23, and *Histoire du Cinéma*, 2nd ed, Paris, Martel, 1948, p. 214. It was, ironically, a calf's head which provided the replacement eyeball for slicing by the razor in the 'prologue' to *Un Chien Andalou*, as Buñuel explains in Gubern, op cit, p. 12. Presumably following Mitry and Bardèche/Brasillach, Luis Garcia-Abrines also reports only one piano, in 'Rebirth of Buñuel', *Yale French Studies*, n 17, Summer 1956, p. 61, as does Freddy Buache, *The Cinema of Luis Buñuel*, London, Tantivy, 1973, p. 12.

74 plicable the change of animal. Nor is considerable professional familiarity with iconographic traditions for the imagery of the scene adequate protection against the internally contradictory impulse to count not only one donkey and one piano, but also four of each.¹¹ The proximity of frame-stills, on the other hand, is presumably what obliges another commentator to correctly count the number of priests in this shot, but does not prevent him from reducing to the singular the remaining elements of the protagonist's burden,¹² while yet another, still more muddled, sees only one piano, cannot decide whether there is one or more 'pumpkins' ('potirons'), and mistakenly places it/them upon 'the' piano before proceeding to convert the priests into the hauliers.¹³ Compounding the surrealism, it is not towards his sexual target but towards himself, thinks Mitry, that the protagonist appears to haul his burden.¹⁴

Priests and pianos could hardly claim immunity from the misconstructions, as criticism produced not knowledge but chimeric versions of the text's own play with non-sense and with travesty. The haulage of the pianos is thus carried out by two men, it has twice recently been claimed, even in support of 'A World Theory of Film'.¹⁵ In a similar case of errant doubling, it is the two priests with whom the solitary protagonist is explicitly confused.¹⁶ The lat-

11. C B Morris, *Surrealism and Spain, 1920-1936*, Cambridge UP, 1972, pp 28 and 121. In the latter case, Morris errs in quoting, without correction, Dalí's own memory of the obscure demands placed upon the props man for *Un Chien Andalou* (see Dalí, *The Secret Life*, p 213).

12. Lincoln F Johnson, *Film: Space, Time, Light and Sound*, New York, Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1974, p 266. Ken Kelman sees only one donkey and one piano in 'The Other Side of Realism', in Sitney, ed, *Essential Cinema*, New York, Anthology Film Archives and New York UP, 1975, p 113, as does Charles Barr in repeating Mitry's comparison between McCarey's 'Wrong Again' and 'Un Chien Andalou' in his book *Laurel and Hardy*, London, Studio Vista, 2nd ed, 1968, p 36.

13. Yveline Baticle, *Clés et Codes du Cinéma*, Paris, Magnard Université, 1973, p 54. The fruit are referred to as 'melons' in the scenario, op cit, p 36. J H Matthews mistakenly implies that the film 'faithfully places before our eyes' the (single) cork and melon specified in the scenario (*Surrealism and Film*, Ann Arbor, Univ Michigan, 1971, p 87).

14. Mitry, *Le Cinéma Expérimental*, cit, p 152.

15. Parker Tyler, *The Shadow of an Airplane Climbs the Empire State Building: A World Theory of Film*, New York, Doubleday, 1972, p 180; *Underground Film*, 2nd ed, Penguin, 1974, p 133.

16. Baticle, loc cit. Baticle and Tyler (see previous note) may well have been confusing this passage in the film with the subsequent scene (shots 176-242) in which the protagonist confronts his 'double', an encounter which is sufficiently disorienting for both protagonist and spectator for even a veteran surrealist, Georges Sadoul, to get the killing the wrong way round, in *French Film*, London, Falcon Press, 1947, p 39, or for a critic hunting allegory to see it as a case of literal 'suicide' (Piazza, op cit, p 152).

ter are indeed helpful to the protagonist, pulling with their hands and pushing with their feet, but only in the overhead shots (151 and 155), and otherwise (that is, in terms of the relation between film syntax and film diegesis, *surreally*) entirely passive. If Bardèche's and Brasillach's mistaken memories of veal instead of donkey-meat are perhaps partly determined by displaced memories of the cow recumbent on the *chaise longue* in *L'Age d'Or*, then, in a more explicit confusion of Buñuel's first and second films, it is to *L'Age d'Or* that images depicting the haulage of a single piano can, by two-fold error, be incorrectly attributed.¹⁷ Projection of such errors may be assisted by a tendency to literalism: by killing off the priests, for instance, the critic makes it easy to flatten the articulation of Buñuel's anti-clericalism, which is then reduced to the stereotypical rejection of the church itself as 'a dead institution'.¹⁸ To *psychologise* this articulation – to describe the priests as 'frantic', 'clinging', even 'smiling' – only fans the misconstructions.¹⁹ Almost inevitably, perhaps because of the predictable insistence of the scenario (published numerous times in English and in French since 1929), some critics feel obliged to read into this scene clear evidence of that excremental vision in fact suppressed within the finished film.²⁰

II.2 THE SYMBOL AND THE CIPHER This grisly comedy of errors, this *dis-memberment* of *Un Chien Andalou*, should come as no surprise when seen against the background of an anecdotal and impressionistic mainstream critical tradition for the cinema. But it is not simply that, for those critics writing in the last decade, the availability of film-prints and not entirely inadequate published transcriptions should have ruled out the possibility of gross error. What is naturally of greater interest here is the nature of the problems these critics did not face even when the elements for discussion had been adequately recognised. For even then these incongruous pro-filmic properties, mesmeric, fetishistic and defiant, could not, it seems, but encourage hyperbolic and way-

17. David Morse, 'Tristana', *Monogram*, 5 (1974), p 20.

18. Thomas Elsaesser, 'Teorema/Prima della Rivoluzione', *Brighton Film Review*, n 14, Nov 1969, pp 5-7.

19. It is Michael Gould who describes the priests as 'frantic' and as 'clinging to the pianos' in *Surrealism and the Cinema*, London, Tannity, 1976, pp 45 and 62 respectively, while it is Buache, loc cit, who perceives a smile.

20. The scenario, loc cit, specifies that the donkeys' excreta should 'overflow' the pianos along with their hooves, tails, and cruppers, but excrement is not visible in the completed film, where the dead animals are in fact kept from direct contact with the grand piano by the large sheets upon which they lie. Jean Vigo, 'Vers un Cinema Social' (1930), quot in Buñuel, *L'Age d'Or and Un Chien Andalou*, cit, p 76, and Baticle, loc cit, think otherwise, while Matthews, loc cit, explicitly confuses the film with the scenario in this respect.

76 ward speculation as to their space of meaning. The dominant procedure was two-fold. First, elements of the scene were reduced to emblematic status, to no more than direct semantic 'substitutes'. Secondly, they were immediately re-complexified, at a purely quantitative level, by the multiplication of a wide and competing range of assumed fixed signifieds. As successive critics took this open opportunity for guesswork, the various incompatibilities among their readings became more glaring, yet were silently suppressed.

Thus, seen negatively, the donkey-laden pianos could be viewed as the destructively dead weight of the hero's past, of his childhood and upbringing, of his education – but also, and conversely, as a positive love-offering of his past life to the object of his desire.²¹ Seen at another angle, the combination of donkeys and pianos could be viewed, according to an undivulged code, as satirising spectatorial sentimentality,²² a view inflecting the symbolic modality to generate strict positionality (satire) for the filmic utterance. By an ingenious and dubious claim for a pun in the scenario, the combination can even be seen as a reference to buggery.²³ But donkeys and pianos could also be separated, in order to re-shuffle emblems. Thus, according to a broader cultural code, the donkeys can be interpreted as emblems of stupidity, or, again necessarily conversely, as breasts, draped, by a mistaken multiple plural, in pairs.²⁴ If required, donkeys can be recast as cows in order to provide more straightforward arbitrary symbols of the consumer society.²⁵

Pianos, for their part, can be resolved as signs of immutable harmonies, of art, or of bourgeois life in general.²⁶ By a different

21. Respectively: Peter P Schillacci, 'Luis Buñuel and the Death of God', in Wall, ed, *Three European Directors*, New York, Eerdman's, 1973, p 119; Jacques Brunius, 'Experimental Film In France', in Manvell, ed, *Experiment in the Film*, London, Grey Walls Press, 1949, p 100; Raymond Durnat *Luis Buñuel*, London, Studio Vista, 1967, p 30; Renaud, op cit, p 152.

22. Vigo, loc cit.

23. According to the whimsical etymology for the scenario's straightforward reference to the 'pianos à queue' as provided by Lucy Lippard in her translation of the scenario for her edition of *Surrealists on Art*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1970, p 105n. This may well be a retro-active effect of familiarity with Dali's 1934 painting, 'Sodomy Committed by a Skull with a Grand Piano', noted for iconographic comparison with the film by Alice Goetz and Helmut W Banz, *Luis Buñuel: Eine Dokumentation*, Frankfurt, Verband der Deutschen Filmclubs, 1965, following A 36; and also reproduced accessibly, although only in part, by Dali, *The Secret Life*, cit, plate v, top right, opposite p 166.

24. Mondragon, 'Comment j'ai compris Un Chien Andalou', *Revue du Ciné-Club*, nn 8-9, May-June 1949, p 9, and Baticle, loc cit; Durnat, loc cit. Durnat himself has already provided a different reading for the combination of donkeys and pianos (see note 21).

25. Mitry, *Le Cinema Expérimental*, cit, p 152.

26. Mondragon, loc cit; Gould, op cit, p 62; Baticle, loc cit. Buñuel's

combination, the apparently incongruous proximity of priests and donkeys can in another view connote the honesty of documentary 'realism' rather than the stylistic excesses of surrealism, providing evidence of the film-makers' limpid memoration of roadside commonplaces from their native Spain.²⁷ The remaining and in many ways still more inscrutable elements of the protagonist's burden were correspondingly pressed into presumptuous versatility. The ropes became both chains, and the ligatures of the libido.²⁸ Corks could be both driftwood, and jocular intimations, by means of a material paradox, of a weighty argument in progress.²⁹ At the most general level, melons were taken to represent ancestral traditions; alternatively, more specifically and with an optimistic vision of class struggle, as symbols of the disinherited middle-classes; and, even more mysteriously, emblems of sensuality.³⁰ The bold – and isolated – critic who rejects the lucky dip does so only to at once take refuge in a still vaguer notion of the scene as embodying unspecified portmanteau symbolism for the trajectory of male desire.³¹ Quite clearly, the 'paranoiac-critical' method, in all its dubious associationism, the strategy of 'irrational enlargement', in all its debatable fertility, were in these respects not the exclusive domain of the surrealists themselves.

For these critics, the filmic image and its components were unproblematic, and theoretical definitions of filmic and cinematic symbolism were hence not requisite. Implicit, rather, in the promiscuity of their will-to-decode was an assumption that a variety of simple, nominal signifieds was available in equal ratio with a given range of immobilised and reified brute signifiers. This is to say that fixed symbolic codes were assumed within the film, thus harking back to functionalist views of language in general, and to only one strand in psychoanalytic speculation on the transformational process of the dream-work and its production of symbolic images. This corresponded to the view of surrealism as merely a complex form of naturalism, of symbolisation in the cinema as simply the practice of denotation shifted to the distance of a single remove. Inevitably, it constructs a circularity in which a

1922 skit, 'Instrumentation', has recently been taken as evidence for his supposed vision of the orchestra as a bourgeois cultural monopoly (Aranda, *op cit*, pp 251-2), but the skit does not include pianos.

27. For this view, see Jacques Brunius, *En Marge du Cinéma Français*, Paris, Arcanes, 1954, pp 137-8, reintroduced by Basil Wright in *The Long View*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1974, pp 53 and 237. The idea is pinned down to an anecdote by Vicens about a roadside encounter in Spain involving Buñuel and Dalí, recounted by Sadoul, 'Viridiana et Quelques Autres', in Buñuel, *Viridiana*, Paris, InterSpectacles, 1962, pp 18-19.

28. Respectively: Pornon, *op cit*, p 109; Baticle, *loc cit*.

29. Respectively: Schillacci, *loc cit*; Vigo, *loc cit*.

30. Respectively: Mondragon, *loc cit*; Vigo, *loc cit*; Baticle, *loc cit*.

31. Buache, *op cit*, pp 12-13.

78 'dominant meaning' must be first assumed, along with the direct reversibility of the metaphoric process.³² For all the references to the 'poetic' quality of *Un Chien Andalou*, this was in other words not specified in the sense defined by Jakobson, according to whom the poetic function, 'by promoting the palpability of signs, deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects'.³³ The concepts of 'dichotomy' and 'palpability' were instead displaced by familiar notions of 'transparency'. That *mediation*, and hence only *relative intelligibility*, might constitute conditions for the ontology of symbolic images does not appear to have been considered. Instead, these spiritualising and mutually contradictory diagnoses were perhaps produced by that historic appetite for the 'semantic simulacrum', that quest for the fixed semantic unit, that platonic preference for the 'already-said anterior to textual productivity'.³⁴ Where, rather, was acknowledgement of surrealism's emphatic dispersal of the univocal signified? Where was the film's 'fullness', arguably typical of Buñuel, the 'volume' created by its 'thickening' not of the 'anterior already-said', but of that which had been 'already-said within the film'?³⁵ What of the materiality and opacity of its signifiers, the process and the introversion of the filmic system?

II.3 ICONOGRAPHY AND INTERTEXTUALITY One preliminary means of rescuing analysis from the cul-de-sac of moralising and allegorical analysis, and of providing for an entry into the aesthetics of image-making in the segment, is provided by the conventions of iconographic analysis. This would take as its point of departure the definition of an intertextual 'reservoir' of visual imagery available to the authors of the film for the generation, or, more precisely, *re-combination*, of elements of filmic imagery. The contours and influentality of such a matrix are extremely difficult to map, and greater still to theorise, as we shall see, but certain points of reference are already reasonably clear. For this segment they would be, outstandingly, the pictorial work of Buñuel's collaborator, Salvador Dalí, together with, at other levels, the acting repertoires of silent film-stars Pierre Batcheff and Buster Keaton.

The relationship between *Un Chien Andalou* and the work of the two stars may be rapidly sketched in. In the case of Pierre Batcheff, the French James Dean of the 1920s, it is not unreasonable to

32. These fallacies are chastised by E H Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Arts of the Renaissance*, London; Phaidon, 1972, pp 15-16 and 13 respectively.

33. Roman Jakobson, 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in Sebeok, ed, *Style in Language*, Cambridge, Mass, MIT, p 356.

34. Julia Kristeva, 'La Productivité dite Texte', *Communications*, n 11, 1968, p 62.

35. Jacques Aumont, discussing Buñuel's *Tristana*, in 'Le Plaisir et le Jeu', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, n 223, Aug-Sept 1970, pp 8-9.

detect a parody in *Un Chien Andalou* of his previous conventional romantic roles, in particular perhaps in *The Siren of the Tropics*, directed by Mario Nalpas and Henri Etiévant with Buñuel as assistant director and Duverger director of cinematography, as for *Un Chien Andalou*.³⁶ Such a connection installs *Un Chien Andalou* within the realm of parody by isolating the 'star', underpinned by authorial continuity, as the main axis for its intertextuality with previous cinema. Going back a further stage, to an absent star, it is possible to strengthen this hypothesis by reference to the support provided for the parody by the physical resemblance between Batcheff and another silent comedian, Buster Keaton. The likelihood of Keaton's responsibility for an elaborate gag and pratfall in this segment has not gone unnoticed.³⁷ It should be recollected that Buñuel had ardently reviewed Keaton's *College* in 1927, in fact to the extent of drawing up an international typology for acting styles on the basis of his enthusiasm for Keaton,³⁸ so that it would not be inappropriate to see one dimension of the present segment as an attempt to re-stage the kind of gag typified by Keaton's own attempt to haul a piano into his new and equally unstable home in *One Week*. Over and against moralistic readings of the 'symbolism' of *Un Chien Andalou*, the

36. Batcheff's role in *The Siren of the Tropics* is discussed and illustrated by Aranda, op cit, pp 37-8. Contemporary reviewers were quick to respond to the 'extraordinary gestures' of Batcheff, together with his 'sensibility and intelligence', although these responses do not register the possible element of self-parody (respectively: J Bernard Brunius, 'Un Chien Andalou: Film par Louis [sic] Buñuel', *Cahiers d'Art*, v 4 n 5, 1929, p 231; Paul Rotha, *The Film Till Now*, London, Cape, p 62). In the scenario, the protagonist is called upon at one point to assume the mien of 'a traitor out of melodrama', a lead taken up by Matthews, op cit, p 86, when he detects the deliberate inscription in *Un Chien Andalou* of 'several disparaging allusions to the conventions of the silent movie drama, ridiculing its pantomime of passion and stylised gesture' and differently again by David Curtis, when he suggests that the film fulfils some of the narrative requirements of 'a popular thriller' (*Experimental Film*, London, Studio Vista, 1971, p 22).

37. Randall Conrad, *Luis Buñuel: Surrealist and Filmmaker*, Boston, Museum of Modern Art, mimeo, 1974, p 3.

38. This typology was made up of a binary opposition between European and American acting styles, the essentially expressionistic acting style of what Buñuel calls the 'School of Jannings' – a European lineage also including John Barrymore, Conrad Veidt, and Mosjuchin, characterised by 'sentimentality, prejudices of art, literature, tradition' – and the triumphantly American 'School of Buster Keaton', also starring Monte Blue, Laura la Plante, Bebe Daniels, Tom Moore, Adolph Menjou and Harry Langdon in its advocacy of 'vitality, photogeny, no culture and new tradition' (Buñuel, 'Buster Keaton's College', in Aranda, op cit, pp 272-3). An homage to Keaton would therefore by no means have been out of place for Buñuel and Dalí, whose friend Lorca, the Spanish poet and dramatist, had written his own tribute the previous year – 'El Paseo de Buster Keaton' – a work whose general affinities with *Un Chien Andalou* are discussed by Morris, op cit, pp 51-2.

80 traces of Keaton, and of Batcheff's self-parody, would locate *Un Chien Andalou* more firmly within a comic nexus than that other moralising critical tradition would encourage or permit.³⁹

The pictorial work of Buñuel's co-scenarist, Salvador Dali, can be much more closely related to the segment. Although the production history of *Un Chien Andalou* is still by no means clear, it would appear, as discussed above, that Dali's main contribution to the production process involved the mise-en-scène of this very segment. Indeed, it appears to have been a symptomatically feverish and grisly contribution, with Dali, working like a painter or a sculptor, emptying and enlarging the donkeys' eye-sockets, cutting at their mouths to emphasise the teeth, and adding supplementary jaw-bones 'so that it would appear that although the donkeys were already rotting they were still vomiting up a little more of their own death, above those other rows of teeth formed by the keys of the black piano'.⁴⁰ The obsessive enlargement and re-fabrication of teeth and versions of teeth clearly supplements at a local level the large-scale trope of repetition and duplication which, as we discuss below, seems to organise the construction of the 'machine' as a whole. While it is difficult to agree with Dali's most recent overweening claim that the film is an animated Dali painting,⁴¹ more general affinities might indeed be reasonably hypothesised with Dali's special interest in such 'props' as donkeys and pianos, his fascination with the 'repetitive' form, and with osseous formation and de-formation. Further generalised connections might be posited between Dali's uncredited performance as one of the two priests and his early predilection for the inclusion of miniature self-portraits within larger tableaux, between the use of ropes to combine into incongruous series a group of materially and symbolically disparate elements and Dali's contemporary experiments in the material heterogeneity of rope-structured collage-work under the putative influence of Picasso. His general appetite for sacrilege and for putrefaction may find ready reference-points within the segment.⁴²

39. Buñuel's commitment to the 'surrealist equivalent' in the commercial cinema, the 'genuine surrealism' of film comedy, may be gauged from his programme of 'Comic Cinema' for the Cineclub Espanol in May 1930 (see Aranda, *op cit*, pp 52-3). This programme, anthologising the work of more than a dozen film comedians, is billed as the first of its kind in a European cineclub. *Un Chien Andalou* itself appears to have run at the Studio 28 in Autumn 1929 on the same bill as an early Harold Lloyd comedy, permitting Jean Lenauer to prefer the 'condensed witticism' of an *echt* American comedy to European surrealist derivatives ('In Praise of Simplicity', *Close Up*, v 6 n 2, Feb 1930, p 138).

40. Dali, *The Secret Life*, *cit*, p 213.

41. Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions*, *cit*, p 76.

42. For a discussion of the difficult relationship between 'Dalian' iconography and 'Un Chien Andalou', see appendix below.

These tentative proposals must be charged at once with reservations over questions of *determination* and *transmission*. What, for instance, is the *specificity* of the satire upon the Batcheff persona, and in addition, how *exact* a parallel might one draw between the 'gags' with which Buñuel and Dali sought to fill the film, and the semiosis of the gags of Buster Keaton? In the case of the 'typically Dalian' donkeys and pianos, how can one argue their *place* and *weight* within the segment without first understanding the role of these elements within the 'original' Dalian painting-texts, a task still largely unattempted? What of those elements traceable not only to Dali but perhaps to Buñuel, and in addition, what is the difference between elements referable back some to visual, and some to verbal, codes of iconography? What then is the nature of the work performed by the cinematic and filmic codes upon this legacy, and what is the distinction between such *implicit* iconographic elements as those discussed above, and the *explicit* reference to Vermeer's *The Lacemaker* in an earlier segment (shot 29)? Fundamentally, why in terms of textual disposition should certain segments of the film be more heavily iconographically invested than the rest, and therefore how are these varied 'residues' reorganised, formalised and synchronised within the dream-fabric of the *current* body of the text?

Until such questions can be more fully answered, it must be quite clearly the case that the historiographic principle upon which various 'sources' have been nominated as potential 'reservoirs' of reference for *Un Chien Andalou* depends, fallaciously, upon the separation out of individual image-components in order to foster a simple 'myth of origins', disconnecting them from their fuller histories, and from each other, in order to refer them diachronically, upon the basis of an untheorised genetic principle, to the pre-texts of their imagined 'sources'. Without much more elaborate research into this potential matrix for the imagery of this segment, it is inevitable that parallel myths of authorial 'preoccupation' and the 'recurrence' or 'coincidence' of signs, unmediated by closer textual comparison, will be conceded dominance. These would displace, firstly, pressing questions over the *definition* of those image-components to be cross-referred, and secondly, over the very process of 'influence' and 'quotation'. of textual re-insertion and re-investment, substantial queries over that process of *deformation* which may prove to be an essential condition of those torsions which characterise the 'memory bank' of intertextual space. Unexplored at present are the necessary details of such a process of 'intersection' or 'paragrammatism', the precise 'mode of survival' which attends these transfers,⁴³ that overdetermined redistribution of painting

43. I telescope these terms, respectively, from: E H Gombrich, op cit, p 13; Julia Kristeva, 'Pour une Sémiologie des Paragrammes', *Tel*

82 or verbal matter within filmic heterogeneity. The problem is not new, since it was raised for art historians almost forty years ago by Panofsky's key discussion of the terms in which the 'iconic' construct may be thought to absorb, translate, and re-contextualise, available iconographic data.⁴⁴ But this was not immediately grasped in the process of linking iconography to genre-study in film theory in recent years.⁴⁵

II.4 THE SPACE OF THE 'MACHINE' The necessary extension to these suggestive but inadequate methods for examining images from *Un Chien Andalou* would be the attempt to understand their position within their 'new' textuality, that provided by the filmic sequence in its layered 'binding' of filmic, cinematic, and extra-cinematic codes. The rigidity of the symbolic conversions discussed above, and the tenuousness of those iconographic affinities, stemmed from an inability to think the subject (here taken as the hypostatized iconographic or symbolic ingredient) as *product* of, and hence *textured* by, a subject-field (the shot) – an irreducible frame of reference caught within a syntagmatic scale of information (the filmic sequence) as well as within its *anterior* extra-filmic and extra-cinematic context (the field of iconography, construed most broadly). Without these rudimentary parameters, symbolic *specificity* and *relativity* were both unthinkable. The dismemberment of the image, the discovery of its epistemological space, consists not in the isolation of its 'elements', but, as Schéfer has proposed, 'the discovery in the image of the various texts which have simultaneously implicated themselves in it.'⁴⁶

As we have suggested, those critics whose approaches to *Un Chien Andalou* we have been contesting failed to discern, for all their *itemising*, precisely the *itematicity* of signifying elements within this segment. Disintegrating images to their convenience, they could not distinguish between symbolic levels, except by means of oversight, suppression of the less legible connoters. In

Quel, n 29, Spring 1967, espec, pp 58-9; and Laurent Jenny, 'La Sur-réalité et ses Signes Narratifs', *Poétique*, v 4 n 16, 1973, p 519.

44. Erwin Panofsky, 'Studies in Iconology', OUP, 1939, ch 1, 'Introductory', pp 3-31, reprinted in Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970, pp 51-81.

45. See Colin McArthur's 'Iconography and Iconology', BFI/EAS, mimeo, 1973, for a self-criticism of simplified use of notions of 'iconography' in his previous paper 'Iconography and Genre', BFI/EAS, mimeo, 1969, and in his book, *Underworld USA*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1972. The latter thus provides a symptomatic iconographic simplification in its reduction of the 'precisely similarly imagery' shared by *Un Chien Andalou* and Maxwell Shane's 1947 *Fear in the Night* to nothing more than 'razors, sharp-pointed objects' (*Underworld USA*, p 17n).

46. Jean-Louis Schéfer, *Scénographie d'un Tableau*, Paris, Seuil, 1969, p 7.

terms of the 'machine' this was a glaring failure. What should have been considered, rather, was the principle of inter- and intra-iconic montage on which the symbolic 'machine' appears to be constructed for the 'characters' within the diegesis and for the spectators. In thus attempting to define the textual 'space' of the 'machine', what should have been immediately noted were the rhetorical tropes of duplication (two ropes, two loads) and of amplification (the increasing volume and corporality of the constituent items of the loads, deepening the perspectival depth of diegetic space). What might have been considered, secondly, was the signifying insularity of the various items, these explicitly discontinuous signifiers – corks/melons/priests/donkeys-pianos – visually rather than thematically combined into artificial continuity, the 'superimposition' donkeys-pianos adding to the final item in this chain with an enhanced example of incongruous pro-filmic compression/condensation. This line of thinking would lead on to a consideration of the *relativity* of the emblematic or symbolic purports in these images – ranging as they do from Christian emblemata (priests) to the iconographic opacities of corks and melons – and hence of the 'corrugation' or 'fluctuation' of the symbolic chain, what we might refer to as its *differential* mode of productivity. The apparently explicit cultural coding of the priests, for instance – their status as direct metonymies for Christianity – is precisely what confers upon them in most readings the privilege of pure 'transparency', generally authorising them to disappear from the work and process of decipherment, a repression returning through, and thus determining, those globalising readings of the burden of the hero in terms of unitary representation of childhood, religion, education (see section 1.2 above).

In terms of the 'chain' of eyes, this form of scenography would also need to be extended by directing more specific study to the scene's play with the syntactic functions of its images of vision and of eyesight. For it is not only the case, as we shall go on to analyse, that concentration on the 'reaction' shots of the heroine (shots 133, 135, 137, 140, 143)* is what displaces, by deflecting and suspending narrative momentum, the revelation of the overall contours of the protagonist's burden. What is perhaps more telling in this context is the aberrancy in the heroine's gaze which they embody – a gaze which, as examination of the stills will illustrate, as would that of the contexts for many of the 'looks' within the film, focusses not upon the space of the protagonist, but, obliquely, down the wall where she will eventually make her escape. If these shots then represent a form of narrative displacement, they are themselves further contextually

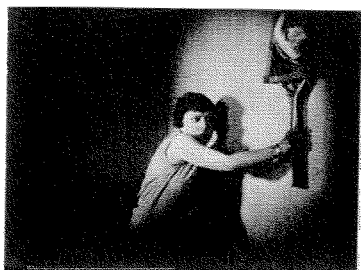
* All separate camera set-ups between shots 128 and 172 are illustrated on pp 84, 87 and 88.



128



129



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132



135



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142



145

displaced, opening up an aberrant reciprocity between the gaze and its ostensible object, contributing to the film's perpetual unsettling of space as located by the frame through implied juxtapositions with 'incoherent' proximate or off-screen space.

This would need to be considered in terms of the construction through elaboration of a 'surprise' not fully collected for the viewer for fourteen shots (131-145), this delay in the provision of 'explanatory' or 'contextualising' shots of the protagonist's total burden displaced instead of that repeated emphasis upon the 'reaction' of the heroine (shots 133, 135, 137, 140, 143), just as, in a later segment, repeated close reaction-shots of the cyclist's increasingly deranged face will long anticipate the revelation of the object of his astonishment – his 'double', ironic 'subject' of these point-of-view shots (shots 185-192). As the scale of these reaction-shots gets tighter, it will be noted, and hence her 'space', so that of the machine increases in proportion.

This process is complicated by the narrative surprise of shot 145 in the context of a lost object the protagonist has at first (and, in retrospect, non-sensically) searched for in his breast-pocket (shot 138), and whose resistance to his traction clearly shocks him (141) as though he has been unaware – like the spectator – of the full extent of his burden. To these inflections we would need to add the *gradualism* of the introduction of the separate items of the burden: cork floats in shot 141; the melon in 142, clarified as one of a pair, two shots later, in shot 144; the overall shot 145 leaving only the priests' heads visible, and so making their position in relation to the 'machine' impossible to ascertain until shots 150 and 154; the passivity of the priests in shots 150 and 154 countered by their apparent helpfulness in the shifting of the burden of which they form a part, in shots 151 and 155, the alternations of viewpoint and cross-cutting (150/151/154/155) confusing both possibilities. It is a device for contradiction announced as long ago as the opening shots of the film, where contradiction is provided by incompatible relationships between camera angles and decor within an otherwise strict alternating syntagm (shots 2-5), and here it is by a related process of inversion that the close-ups of the donkey's head (shots 146, 153) do not seem to correspond, in terms of the positions of the muzzles and the keyboards, to those established in the overall shots (145, 147, 156).

Above all, what intersects with this accretion and division of pro-filmic space is the conjuring of the 'machine' from off-screen space and time, a space contradicting that supplied the viewer in the previous establishing shot of this area of the room (see shot 25), a part of the film's continuous adjustments of this norm for spatial 'security'. If we search for this implied spatial extension, it must be in its confusion, via frontality and depth-of-field, with the space of the spectator, for it is he/she who, in

86 the unexpected abolition of the 'fourth wall' of the apartment, from which the camera has made its previous establishing shots, in a sense provides that space from which the burden is derived, a space from which the viewer has been separated precisely through the conventional narrative dominance accorded the repeated close reaction-shots of the woman upon whom that, or rather 'our', space is bearing.

II.5 NARRATIVE AND SCENOGRAPHIC SPACE This 'immanent' analysis of the segment should be meshed with consideration of the larger narrative or pseudo-narrative in which it is positioned, and hence which, in terms of segmental combination, at a certain level *motivates* or *determines*, or can at least be brought into *syntagm with*, the intra-segmental features we have been describing. The tension we have already outlined between the central dramatic axis of the film and the subsidiary 'branch' actions thus provides one context for the 'encounter' in the present segment. The incident can thus be located on this central 'axis' of the film, and specified in conventional dramatic terms as the apex of the protagonist's attempts to 'gain' the woman, whose breasts he has just managed to fondle through her clothing, an action which involved him in a seemingly 'subjective' series of transformational dissolves indicating her loss of clothing, the nakedness of the breasts, and their convertibility into naked female buttocks (segment 7). Depending on the level of success we concede this phantasy, the donkeys-and-pianos segment will therefore in conventional terms offer itself to be read as an 'anti-climax' – donkeys-and-pianos grotesquely displacing direct physical contact – or climax – the disappointed protagonist's supreme effort to attain his goal.

But these rationalised continuities are contested by other levels of the textual system. Within the traditional parameters of character 'psychology', for instance, it is not clear whether the protagonist's current action represents a continuation of his previous quest, or in his disappointment, a form of punishment, an ambiguity surreally complicated by the fact that the man does not appear to comprehend the enormity of his burden until he has begun to haul it (see his reaction in shot 141). That this mysteriously belated perception does not contradict his intentions as far as the woman is concerned, further fragments any psychological continuity for the segment.

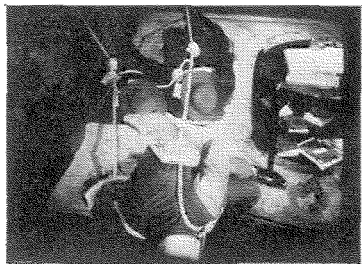
Nor should the unique 'excess' of the 'machine' – conjured from nowhere in the course of the segment, vanishing thereafter – lead us to artificially excise the segment from its broader segmental space, with all the uneven continuities this entails. Thus the haulage of the burden is 'motivated' not only by the failed caress, but, more inscrutably, by the street-scene involving the woman with the severed hand the couple have been watching



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for some time through the window (segment 6), whose accident and death is clearly the 'trigger' for the man's sexual excitement. But the parallel between the woman run down by the motor-car and the woman under threat of running down by a more grotesque machine is itself caught in a broader scheme of balance and containment, and of *circularity*, in a film intent upon alternatives to traditional dramatic structures of causation. Thus the segment closes by 'producing' the heroine's escape from the bedroom – but an escape only into an identical room, and, closing the circle, a room enclosing the double of the cyclist, in costume once again (segment 8). This circularity of action will thus close a 'phase' in the 'relationship', leading to the heroine's immediate suppression from the fiction (only her second, and final, absence) to open a door for a newcomer who will then provide the second major 'antagonist' for the hero (segments 9 and 10) until he too, in the rhythm between 'major' and 'subsidiary' encounters, is disposed of, in order to permit the return of the heroine herself (segment

- 88 12). The ant-infested hand which marks the separation of the hero and the heroine (shots 165, 166, 168) also, in this circularity, marks the return of the same ant-filled hand which, by means of idiomorphic dissolves, installed the passage of the segment as a whole in the first place (as long ago as segment 4, shots 55-63), a passage thus confusing the hero's hand and the bedroom and the street as 'location' for the street-scene.



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Instead of continuous proairetic and hermeneutic linkages, the segment operates, in other words, by fragmentation and the separation rather than the 'tressing' of traditional narrative codes. Thus the restricted scenic space and diegetic ephemerality of the 'machine', for instance, are played off against the overarching systems of connotation attaching to individual components of the machine, *without those connotations forming explicitly coherent systems at other levels of the text*. Thus if the first items, ropes and corks, connote the world of sea-fishing, then perhaps the entire figure may be construed not only as a gargantuan 'catch' but as participating in a wider network through the film in which elements from terrestrial and aquatic life are almost mythically combined or juxtaposed. A disorienting close-up of a sunbather's armpit can thus lead, via a dissolve, to an intent overhead shot of a sea-urchin accompanied by a single human footprint (shots 64-5); the bedroom can be made to give on to an unsuspected beach (shots 285-6); the cyclist's costume, emphatically thrown from the window of the bedroom to the city-street (194-206) can much later therefore be collected from the tide-line (295-7). In respect of a still more graphic image, the attention paid, via close-ups, to the vacant eye-socket of one of the dead donkeys (146, 153) would provide us with the middle term of a chain of ruined eyes stretching from the 'prologue' to the closing image of the couple blinded in the sunlight, 'the donkey's eye and drool indeed repeating the more recent image of the sexually absorbed protagonist, eyes rolled upwards out of use, saliva dribbling (shot 119), to be understood in the context of a film preoccupied with the (especially imaginary) powers of vision. But these relationships do not provide thematic continuities as alternatives to the narrative fragmentation we have outlined. As in the case of the eye-imagery of that other contemporary surrealist, Georges Bataille, the notion of the 'chain' does not permit the construction of a simple metaphoric hierarchy for its constituents.⁴⁷ Connotations of this kind lure, but do not bind, in the disintegrative surrealist textuality of *Un Chien Andalou*.

II.6. CONCLUSION (1) It was to the extent discussed above that *Un Chien Andalou* should have been seen as severely contesting traditional assumptions over the 'naturalisation' of symbols in the cinema through the dominance of narrative discourse, as preferred by Mitry. Mitry's privileged example⁴⁸ is that of the balloon trapped in the wires in Lang's *M* (1930) – materially, and, in its entrapment, positionally, symbolic of the girl murdered by the

47. See Roland Barthes, 'La Métaphore de L'Oeil', in *Essais Critiques*, Paris, Seuil, 1964, pp 238-45.

48. Jean Mitry, *Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma*, Paris, Eds Universitaires, 1963, v 2, p 447.

90 child-killer. For Mitry, this image achieves a supremely even fusion of paradigmatic and syntagmatic connotation, which he honours in the spiritualistic term 'motivated transcendence', a concept for which, of course, a balloon, yet more symbolic, could not help but provide the perfect lift-off. But in *Un Chien Andalou*, as we have seen, we tend to be debarred from quitting 'the framework of the symbolic unit itself' in order to 'locate the motivation of the symbol'.⁴⁹ No amount of quitting the scene of these symbolisations in the film will enable us to found more than a highly partial genesis elsewhere, even taking the possibilities of classical iconographic analysis as one means of returning the imagery of the segment to certain of its extra-filmic and extra-cinematic 'roots', and even 'stretching' iconographic study to conjoin with 'immanent' analysis of topographic and scenographic space.

We are then not witness to the application of *filmed symbols* in the manner deplored by Mitry in *Un Chien Andalou*,⁵⁰ nor to the implication of *filmic symbols*, of the kind, and in the manner Mitry prefers. It is rather that we should assert the film's play with the species of the sign, a blocking of the diegesis within its own localised materiality, a form of connotation which congeals into what we might call 'unmotivated immanence' in contradistinction to that 'motivated transcendence' idealised by Mitry. Hence, perhaps, the film's *semiotic* affinity with surrealist painting practice, rather than those restricted iconographic homologies which have so far suggested themselves to historians of art and of the cinema. The new task for analysis would then become, as we indicate above, less the foreshortened quest for the illusory 'buried' signifieds of the symbolic *mise-en-scène*, than an attempted resolution of the terms of their position in the systems of the shots and sequences of shots among which they are paradoxically the excessive and yet contained intruders. In short, the resolution of the terms of a filmic system which *finds space* for such specific signifying recalcitrance, such varied and defiant specificity, the exactness of its surrealism. This is the task to which our second textual analysis returns, in its attention to the 'prologue' of *Un Chien Andalou*.

49. See Christian Metz's discussion of Mitry's views on 'Metaphor, Symbol, Language' in 'Current Problems of Film Theory', *Screen*, v 14 nn 1-2, Spring-Summer 1973, espec pp 70-8.

50. Mitry, *Histoire du Cinéma Muet*, cit, v 3, p 349.

III.1 INTRODUCTION (2) It is to the opening of the film that I return in order to discuss more closely the interpenetration of questions over 'narrative' and 'image' in *Un Chien Andalou*, and in so doing it is upon a still crueller assault upon the female eye that I focus. The 'prologue' of *Un Chien Andalou* has for this very reason attracted still wider speculation than the passage just discussed. An unappeased and ambitious appetite for 'other' scenes, for instance, means that this segment, as much as the whole film, has still to be rescued from the ravages of a primitive psychoanalysis bent on the unearthing of straightforward psychosexual allegory at the 'core' of *Un Chien Andalou*.⁵¹ Within this mode, for instance, the 'prologue' can duly be promoted to the status of an allegory of childbirth from conception (the sharpening of the razor) to the maturation of the embryo (the full moon) to traumatic parturition (the bursting eye).⁵² With no greater theoretical imperative, other commentators would, on the other hand, prefer to read the 'fore-play' of the 'prologue' in terms of post-rather than pre-natal symbolism.⁵³ Thus eye and razor can be made to assume covert genital significance, their hapless collision decipherable as warning of the destructiveness of sexual union, even insufferable sexual initiation.⁵⁴ The same signifiers can then be pressed into other moulds — erotic foreplay (the sharpening of the razor), desire triumphant (the full moon), sexual congress (the severed eye). It was therefore not difficult to extend these amorphous connotations as far as a blurred re-enactment of the moment or the instance of castration, or of the 'fragmented body', wildly conjured by anatomical associationism.⁵⁵

The alternatives were still more phantasmagoric, for free association could be even freer, as critics lacking disciplinary pretensions clearly showed. Thus, by grand synecdoche, the razor in the 'prologue' could become the film itself, the pointed surgical discretion of its violence transformed in memories of 'slashing' and of 'gouging'.⁵⁶ Managing, at a stroke, to overturn the idealist humanism of Renaissance perspectival codes, the eyes it really

51. For two recent examples of this inclination, see Kelman, *op cit*, and Conrad, 'The Minister of the Interior is on the Telephone', *cit*.

52. Mondragon, *loc cit*.

53. Durgnat, *op cit*, p 23, glosses the 'prologue' as symbolising 'a period of infantile experience'.

54. Durgnat, *op cit*, p 24; Renaud, *op cit*, p 151.

55. Respectively: Christian Zimmer, *Cinéma et Politique*, Paris, Seghers, 1974, p 268, and Joel Farges, 'L'Image d'un Corps', *Communications*, n 23, pp 92-3.

56. Respectively: David Robinson, *World Cinema: A Short History*, London, Methuen, 1973, p 146; 'O.B.', 'Paris Shorts and Longs', *Close Up*, v 5 n 2, Aug 1929, p 143.

92 opens are thus those of its spectators, whose repeated acts of viewing, ever passive, like the eye, cannot blunt it, and who must henceforward learn to see with a new eye.⁵⁷ Alternatively, the razor operates a formal scission within the film itself, splitting the text – another eye, another matter – into two, producing a supposedly distinct bipartite structure.⁵⁸ It can in the same vein become a grand metaphor for framing and for montage.⁵⁹ Buñuel's razor, *Un Chien Andalou* is also Dali's heart-bound dagger with which Dali thinks to quell a city, or, by an appropriate reversal, an open artery which inundates the viewer with the 'thick blood of the unconscious circulating through and out from its images'.⁶⁰ Thus elaborated, small wonder that this prepotent image can become a talisman among film historians, source for that true quality of outrage by which to measure all latter-day attempts at cinematic subversion.⁶¹

Here it is the critic rather than the film who provides the phantasy. As we have seen in our examination of another segment of the film, these forms of decipherment and exaltation were in fact surreptitious forms of annealment, of blurring rather than of specifying textual conundrums. They merely transposed the recesiveness of surrealist textual productivity into a supposed knowledge, shifting its real weak coherence into a more acceptably logical chain of consequence, perishing its specificity in the very motion with which they conferred their psychoanalysing or symbolising pedigree. My argument in this section of the article therefore does not engage with previous travesties of the segment, whose strong auto-destructive tendencies will need little underlining, but this time with a technically correct description of the 'prologue' produced by Linda Williams' attempt to specify in *Un Chien Andalou* an example of a relatively rare filmic figure, the metaphor-in-syntagm characterised by an inverted 'background'-'foreground' relationship.⁶²

In Linda Williams' scheme, the 'prologue' is subdivided into three series of shots – numbered by her 1-4, 5-6 and 7-12, but renumbered here as 2-5, 6-7 and 8-13 to match my own transcription which, differently than Williams', numbers inter-titles as 'full' shots. The first series she describes as an alternating

57. Respectively: Jean-Louis Perrier, 'L'Oeil Tranché', *Cinéthique*, nn 7-8, 1970, p 23; Schillacci, op cit, p 193 and Peter Cowie, ed, *A Concise History of the Cinema*, London, Tantivy, 1971, v 1 p 165; Durgnat, op cit, p 23, adapting Robert Benayoun, *Érotique du Surréalisme*, Paris, Pauvert, 1965, p 206 caption; Vigo, op cit, pp 75-6.

58. Burch, loc cit.

59. Farges, op cit, p 93 and Pascal Bonitzer, 'Le Gros Orteil', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, n 232, Oct 1971, p 20; Bonitzer, ibid.

60. Dali, *The Secret Life*, cit, p 212; André Bazin, 'The Depths of Reality' (1952), in Kyrrou, op cit, p 190.

61. Vogel, op cit, pp 63 (caption), 250, 267.

62. Williams, 'The Prologue to *Un Chien Andalou*', cit.

syntagm of close shots 'assembling' the hands and torso of the man wielding the razor; the second, as a pair of medium shots 'contextualising' the actor in his environment; the third, a more complicated unit beginning as an alternating syntagm but overlapping with another alternating syntagm in order to create the metaphoric figure. These three sub-segments are then subsumed by Williams within a dominant pattern of alternating syntagms which describe two connected sets of actions: the sharpening and test-cutting in shots 2-6, and the final bisection of both moon and eye in shots 9-13. While Williams now confirms my earlier claim for the extreme importance, for these syntagmatics, of the explicit diegetic incoherences – the differing spatial relationships between man and window in shots 2, 4 and shots 3, 5 – my present argument is that other articulations have in fact been repressed in favour of a binary division between 'syntagmatic' and 'diegetic' coherence. My first target is the median pair of shots least discussed by Williams (6-7), my second the question of syntactic relativity within shots 8-13, the matrix for her case of metaphor-in-syntagm.

III.2 CROSSING THE LINE While Williams now accommodates diegetic 'interruption' within the alternating syntagm of shots 2-5, for instance, she points to no kind of break in reference to shots 6 and 7, which she homogenises as the central unit of her syntagmatic triptych in terms of their joint 'description' and 'contextualisation' of the protagonist. Hitherto, indeed, he has only been introduced in fragments – via synecdoche, to start with, in shot 2, via an image of his hands at work. But while this pair of shots break the pattern of protagonist/protagonist's vision, displacing 'alternation' of a familiar type by a 'repetition' of 'objective' viewpoints, it none the less also institutes, via a special form of spatial rupture, a different kind of 'alternation' that will prove crucial for analysis of shots 11-13. This special form of rupture consists in the breaking of the 'continuity' of shots 6 and 7 at the level of actorial 'content' – both shots, for Williams, simply showing 'the whole person and the general scene through which he moves'⁶³ – by a major alteration in camera-position.⁶⁴ That is to say, in shot 6 we watch the protagonist exit

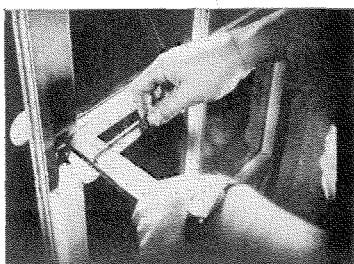
63. Williams, *op cit*, p. 28.

64. On the relationship between the 180-degree line the camera is 'forbidden' to cross, and the 180-degree line of the screen behind which the spectator cannot and must not go, see Stephen Heath, 'Narrative Space', *Screen*, v 17 n 3, Autumn 1976, p 88. On the support the rule provides for narrative cinema's subordination of 'space as space' to 'space as site of action', see Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, 'Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu', *Screen*, v 17 n 2, Summer 1976, pp 42-3.

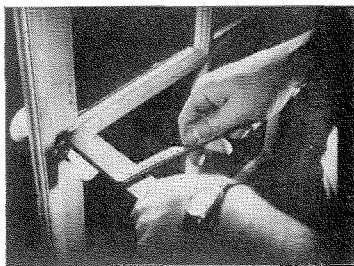
94 from the room via the French window, while in shot 7 we receive him as he emerges on the other side, from a position diametrically opposite to the balcony on to which he now passes. The continuity of actorial 'character' – only recently, in shot 6, introduced in its entirety – is our only fixed point of reference, in the face of the abrupt spatial reorientation, from inside looking out, to outside looking in.

If the rupture of the 180-degree shot-change were to be accepted as a further potential segmental break within the 'prologue', it would then be possible to redistribute the series as subdivided by Williams. One alternative might be to divide the central unit (shots 6 and 7) in two, granting these shots a similarity of actorial 'content' subverted by the change in view-point, reassimilating shot 6 retrospectively into the series 2-5 as a medium shot 'summarising' the alternation of (fragmentary) close-shots which have preceded and therefore in some sense 'determined' it. The corollary would be that shot 7 would then come to be regarded more classically as an establishing shot for the 'future' analytic close-ups of shots 9 and 10, the 'subjective' vision of shot 10. This redistribution would have the effect not only of making a new general spatial 'exchange' within the 'prologue' – interior versus exterior location, hinged on the 180-degree disjunction – but would at the same time more faithfully account for the slight temporal interval distinguishable between shot 6 (the opening of the French window, seen from inside) and shot 7 (the man's entry on to the balcony, already accomplished as the shot opens).

To the syntagmatic implications of the 180-degree rupture we should not fail to add two points of interest. First, we should note its re-marking at the level of shot-scale as the longest shot in the series, a distance which further expands the diegetic space of a 'prologue' which has moved, in terms of shot-scale, from close-ups (shots 2-5) to medium-shot (shot 6) to long-shot (shot 7), and which will shortly culminate in the ambiguous depth of those long-shots of moon and cloud (shots 9 and 12) – where, against a background of imponderable depth (the uniformly darkened night sky) the only two figurative elements, moon and cloud, defy explication of their relative distances either when spatially separated within the frame (as at the beginning of shot 9) or overlapped (as in shot 12). (The ambiguity of this distance, further complicated by the textural affinity between the smoke copiously produced by the man and the substance of the cloud, might add a further layer to the – unarguably – spatially conjoined eye and razor of shot 13.) The second supplementary aspect of the 180-degree rupture is the *frontality* of the shot which marks the transgression of the 'line'. For the deepest shot (so far) in the 'prologue' is also its most strikingly rectilinear, in terms of frontal view of character, and the perfectly rectangular bisection



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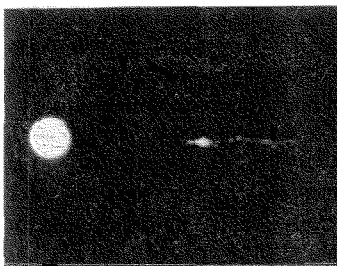
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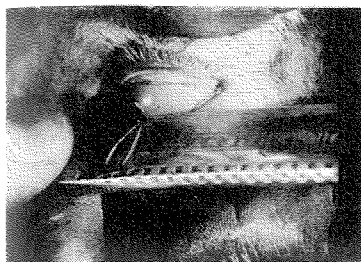


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of the frame by the edge of the balcony on which he now stands. In this sense, the equal frontality of camera-position in shot 6 (a further common feature of both shots) has been reinforced by the turning of the character into the rectilinearity of the compositional angles of decor and camera-position, and then by the apparent eyeline-match between the character and the spectator, a match explicit in the close-shots of the woman (shots 11 and 13). Contrast, for instance, that complex triangularity composed by camera-angle and -height, together with the disposition of pro-filmic elements (hands and arms, razor-strop, window) in shots 2 and 4. If the proscenium-style curtaining of the windows in shot 6 is hardly strong enough to anticipate the extremely marked tableau-effect of camera- and character-position in shot 7, it is nonetheless true that it is the notion of the *theatrical*, in its connections both with notions of *identification* and *estrangement* which is generated by the condensation of codic shifts within shot 7.

III.3 SYNTAX AND SUBJECTIVITY A second objection may be raised against Williams' characterisation of shots 8-13 as two overlapping alternating syntagms (8-10/11, 11-13). In this case, she suggests, there are two stylistic departures from the earlier section of the 'prologue'. Firstly, the established object of vision/subject of vision relationship is reversed: we now see the viewer first, then his view. Second, given this inversion, the expectation of a repetition of the opening four-shot alternating syntagm is varied by the loss of the fourth shot of the syntagm; the second shot of the cloud and moon is in fact delayed a shot by the introduction of the shot of the woman in its place in shot 11. What are in fact produced in shots 8-13, I would argue, are three separated pairs of images – the man (8, 10), moon and cloud (9, 12), the woman (11, 13) – whose syntagmatic inter-relationships are more complex than those suggested by Williams, who appears simply to equate, for instance, the two-shot syntagm of the woman with that of the moon and cloud.

To begin with, it would be possible to break shots 8-13 into two formally similar three-shot partial alternating syntagms (8-10, 11-13) separated by the temporal and spatial interval necessary,



13a



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within the terms of a 'realist' reading, for the introduction of fresh elements, such as the tie, and the woman, in shot 10. The first of these, 8-10, would provide a perfect example of the traditional 'closed' point-of-view structure in the ABA pattern⁶⁵ – man, moon, man. The central shot of the moon, shot 9, would thus be 'semi-subjective', within Mitry's typology of 'subjective' images in film.⁶⁶ Shots 11-13 at first sight repeat this traditional 'enclosure' of point-of-view, in their organisation of images of a viewer (the woman in shots 11 and 13) around an image (the moon in shot 12) which has already been established (shot 9) as a viewable object – even if (a crucial nuance) established within a more specified diegetic location than that provided for the close-ups 11 and 13 which climax the 'prologue' in an utopic or purely associationist 'space'. As in shots 8-10 we appear to see the man watching the moon, so, through this apparent repetition of the overall enclosed point-of-view structure, in shots 11-13 we appear to see the woman watching the moon. An identity of action (watching) and of the object of attention (the moon) appears to be signified by this repetition.

Various problems are entailed by this redistribution of shots 8-13 into a pair of three-shot syntagms constituting closed point-of-view structure in the ABA pattern. To begin with, the symmetry postulated here demands that the central 'semi-subjective' image in each case (the moon in shots 9 and 12) is the object of two views, that of the man *and* of the woman, when, although the long-shot structure of the semi-subjective image itself remains constant, the shots of the viewers suggest markedly different viewing orientations. While the man appears to be viewing a point established within the diegesis as being 'the sky', the woman, who is at no point spatially located within the diegesis (except in relation to the figure with the razor), is shown to be in eyeline-match *with the spectator*. The direction of her gaze, if we regard

65. For a repertory of cinematic point-of-view structures, see Edward Branigan, 'Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot', *Screen*, v 16, n 3, Autumn 1975, espec pp 60-1.

66. For summary and discussion of Mitry's typology, see Metz, 'Current Problems of Film Theory', cit, pp 45-9.

98 it as the gaze circumscribing or determining the view of the moon in shot 12, implies that in this sense *the spectator* is also *the site of the moon*. This impossibility has the effect both of climaxing the 'prologue' in an utopic space and also, since the 'prologue's' only known characters are both on screen together, of refusing the spectator the traditional refuge via suture.⁶⁷ The frontality of the shots of the woman thus draws the spectator into the space of vision in the 'prologue' even more radically than that other 'crossing of the line', already discussed, to confront the man within the frontality of shot 7.

This complication of point-of-view via frontality of camera-angle in shots 11-13 is further developed in various ways. The ABA symmetry, for instance, is adjusted here by the tightening of shot-scale between shots 11 and 13, so that 13 is no mere 'repetition' but an 'analytic' close-up. There is also an important gestural and temporal homogeneity across shots 11-13, the movement of cloud-on-moon in 12 interrupting, yet matching on action, the cutting of the eyeball in 11 and 13. In this sense, shot 12 may possess a highly 'substitutionary' charge, in its deceptive 'promise' to deflect, via metaphorical substitution, an outrage which shot 13 in fact goes on to fulfil and elaborate in greater detail.⁶⁸ No such 'bonding' can be discerned across shots 8-10 – except tangentially, through the presence of a sliver of cloud which as it were 're-figures', as has been remarked, the smoke produced by the smoker in the previous shots. The first 'semi-subjective' shot of the moon is thus even further separated out into 'subjectivity', separated almost completely from its presumed diegetic situation, held in place only by the syntax, perhaps to this extent preparing for the more extreme problems over its status on its repetition in shot 12, as discussed above, for what we might see as its syntactic *overdetermination* and *pluralisation*.

Attractive as it may be for the symmetries it reveals, the fundamental difficulty with such a reading is over not only the spatial similarity of the shots of the moon (9 and 12) in relation to different eyelines, but in their temporal relationship with each other. For the postulation of a diegetic interval between shots 10 and 11 is contradicted by the continuity of the motion of cloud on moon, 'begun' in 9 and 'completed' in 11. There are, however, two possible rationalisations of this apparent contradiction. The simpler is to accept, as Williams now does, that the man of shots 11 and 13 is not the 'same' man as previously introduced, for all his 'continuation' of the action with the

67. On the question of the 'suture', see Jean-Pierre Oudart, 'La Suture', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, nn 211-12, Apr-May 1969, forthcoming in *Screen*.

68. This point is made by Matthews, *op cit*, p 85, and by Sitney, *Visionary Cinema*, New York, OUP, 1974, p 5.

razor. Once he is accepted as another, second, man, he can be re-located to that unspecified location of the woman, and their relationship in shots 11 and 13 made temporally 'continuous' with, if narratively subsequent to, the activity of the first man. To rationalise the continuity of the movement of moon on cloud, therefore, might demand the acceptance of a second man for shots 11 and 13, a supposition which, dislodging the first actor, *Buñuel himself*, from the 'prologue', has considerable extensions for notions of authorial self-inscription within the 'prologue' (see section III.4 below).

A further option is to retain diegetically motivated elements, in this case the watcher on the balcony and the moon he appears to view, and to blur the three-shot syntagm separated out above into one long six-shot sequence where a four-shot alternating syntagm featuring man and moon (8, 9, 10, 12) is extended by the introduction of 'comparative' or 'metaphorical' inserts (the cutting of the woman's eye in 11 and 13). This reading relies on two notions of the 'subjective' insert and at the same time on two categories of narration. Shots of the moon would be 'semi-subjective', in the Mitryan sense already deployed, representing the 'real' vision of the man within 'established' diegetic time and space (the room and balcony by night). Shots of the slitting of the eye would then fall into two possible categories for the 'insert'. They might be considered as 'imagined' by the man watching the moon, as imaginary extensions of her perceptions of and relation to the action of moon on cloud. This would make them 'subjective' inserts in the Metzian sense,⁶⁹ denoting the conferment of narration upon a character within the diegesis, and thereby exemplifying Buñuel's enduring fascination with the syntactic ambiguities of 'substitutionary' narration.⁷⁰ Ambiguous, since the narrating 'source' is left sufficiently flexible for us to prefer to see the two shots in question as simply non-diegetic inserts, by which choice we would restrict narration to the over-all author of the discourse alone, depriving his characters of their status as potential substitutionary narrators. The beauty of this particular example, of course, is that Buñuel's two-fold status as both 'author' and 'actor' makes this distinction still less clear-cut, in fact encouraging a confusion of narrative voices underlined within shots 8-13 by the 'disappearance' of the shot of the character-viewer after shot 10, and the intervention of the first

69. For Metz, the subjective insert expresses 'not the present instance, but an absent moment experienced by the hero of the film' ('Problems of Denotation in the Fiction Film', in *Film Language*, OUP, 1974, p 125).

70. Inez Hedges, 'Substitutionary Narration in the Cinema?', *Substance*, n 9, 1974, pp 45-47, discusses the movement from 'unfocalised' to 'internally focalised' to 'externally focalised' and back to 'internally focalised' narration in Buñuel's *Tristana*.

100 of the shots of the woman (11) between character-viewer (10) and 'established' object of vision (12), thus creating a 'deviant' point-of-view structure⁷¹ based on an 'impossible' eyeline-match between 10 and 11, fusing versions of 'subjectivity'.

III.4 THE INSCRIPTION OF THE AUTHOR Williams' general commentary upon the 'prologue' runs into further difficulties when she proposes a further sense in which the figure under analysis can be seen as 'a general symbol of the entire act of filmic creation', by which she refers to the fact that the man with the razor is Buñuel himself, who is thus privileged as both 'generative' and dominant viewer within the 'prologue', and also cuts in both a specific mimicry of film editing and of filmic bricolage in general.⁷² Certainly, the pattern of association here could indeed be reinforced historically by reference to the cutting-ratio available to Buñuel for this production, especially in its interaction with the disjunctive aesthetics of surrealism at large, and, along the authorial sub-code, with Buñuel's own contemporary fascination for a cinema of 'segmentation'.⁷³ But the suppression of the co-authorship of Dali; the dubious equation between the four strops of the razor in shot 3 and the first four shots of the opening alternating syntagm; the encapsulation of the 'entirety' of filmic 'creation' in terms of 'cutting' and of 'vision' – these are only the first of the problems generated by such essentially intuitive extrapolations.

More important for film analysis is discussion of the precise *modes* of the inscription of the co-author/actor in the 'prologue' and in other dimensions of the text. Buñuel's actorial *presence* within the 'prologue', for example, needs to be related, within the film's actantial structure, to his *absence* from the remainder of the text, thus posing an enigma whereby his apparent initial control and mastery also signals his own cancellation and disappearance from the fiction. The actorly connotations which distinguished Buñuel, uncredited in the main titles, from the titular star, Pierre Batcheff – the bullish, shirt-sleeved smoker, preparing a razor, versus the intent cyclist in maid's uniform – would provide another angle on this displacement within the text's overall play with questions of actorial appearance, disappearance, and travesty. The complementary implications for the role of the woman, who, conversely, mysteriously survives the violence done to her – with her apparent collusion – in the 'prologue', are discussed in the following section.

It is in this sense that the 'alterations' to the presence of the

71. For discussion of the 'deviant' point-of-view structure, see Branigan, *op cit*, p 57.

72. Williams, *op cit*, pp 32-3.

73. Buñuel, "Découpage" ou Segmentation . . . (1928) *cit*.

co-author/actor in shot 11 – face framed-out, tie added, watch removed – are of considerable relevance. For these alterations not only serve to interrogate our assumptions of actorial continuity, but also further complicate the questions surrounding the co-author's self-inscription in the text. Foregrounding the face of the woman, the composition of this shot not only proposes the likelihood of temporal and spatial distance from the preceding shot, but in effacing the male actor – who is never to reappear, except synecdochically, via bodily fragments, as discussed below – perhaps also encourages speculation as to the possibility of an actorial/actantial elision of a kind with which we are likely to be more familiar from the work of another author/cameo-actor, Alfred Hitchcock. We might well remember here Hitchcock, in his stetson, prefiguring, then replaced by, the Arizonan property-buyer Cassidy in *Psycho* – other author, in his munificent and lubricious paternity, of the crime and flight of Marion Crane – Hitchcock another customer quitting the scenes (music-shop, bird-shop) of what will prove to be key transactions on the part of his protagonists in *Strangers on a Train* and *The Birds*, seducing them into that space in order to efface his own appearance/disappearance; Hitchcock, unlike Roger Thornhill, barred from locomotion at the beginning of the oedipal itinerary of *North by North-West*.⁷⁴

This calling into question of the place of the co-author/actor in the 'prologue' is effected by his segmentation in the framing, which thereby reduces the totality and hence the identity of his attributes, repeating at another level the decomposition and dismemberment of the actor in the alternating syntagm which opens the segment, and his 'revolving' in relation to the decor. In a classic case of *mise-hors-scène*, whereby off-screen space becomes a more than usually critical reservoir of repressed elements, his access to power and control depends upon the synecdoche whereby 'he' becomes his razor, condensed to his machine. Functioning perhaps according to the surrealist credo of automatism, caught up in the 'crisis of the object', participating in that critique of anthropomorphic figurative drawing implied for Breton by the 'invisible editing' of the *cadavre exquis*,⁷⁵ the razor in *Un Chien Andalou* – always separated, by the framing, from its expected destination, the face of the *man* – takes on its own variant life not only within a hypothetical diegetic 'reality', but within

74. See Raymond Bellour, "'The Birds': Analysis of a Sequence', BFI/EAS, mimeo, 1972, pp 37-8, and 'Le Blocage Symbolique' in *Communications*, n 23, 1975, p 343, for discussion of Hitchcock's self-insertion into the 'overtures' to *The Birds* and *North by North-West*.

75. See André Breton, 'Crisis of the Object' (1936) and 'The Exquisite Corpse, its Exaltation' (1948), in his *Surrealism and Painting*, London, MacDonald, 1972, pp 275-80 and 288-90 respectively.

- 102 the narrative productivity of the 'prologue', fulfilling a scenario where its action is described without any reference to human agency at all. As a result, the 'subject' becomes only one object among other objects, so that even more than in *Tristana* 'the "actants" are no longer charged with the status of the subject but decompose into a series of gestures (anaphoras), the dismembered body of the film'.⁷⁶

III.5 THE PLACE OF THE WOMAN Imbricated with, but more crucial than, the effacement/disappearance of the co-author/actor, more important than his absorption into the 'automatism' of hands and razor, is the 'other' subject of the close-ups 11 and 13. For the co-author's/actor's progress to some form of 'subjective' narration is determined fundamentally by the unannounced introduction of nothing more or less than: the face of the woman. Just as the razor is separated from his own face by the composition, so his face is never seen once hers it. It is in fact the face of the woman which instigates and bears the violence of the male in *Un Chien Andalou* – which connects by metaphor, by refiguration, with a moon which he can only penetrate as viewer and cloud-maker. It is the face of the woman which suppresses, redefines and refigures the male presence and activity within the film. In a classic example of the 'expulsion and/or radical contestation of the codes of orientation (contiguous/continuous links) by a strategic return to "frontality"',⁷⁷ it is she who does nothing but re-turn, confront, in close-up eyeline-match, the viewer's view, whereas the male's has been the expenditure (preparation, trance/vision, aggression) with which the spectator has been variously encouraged to identify (by the quasi-subjective angles of shots 2 and 4, or the field of vision in shot 9). 'Containing' the image of the moon as distant as it was from him, she will also, in the privilege of her extremer close-ups – perhaps related to the 'pitiful geography' of facial close-ups charted by Buñuel in his 1927 review of Dreyer's *Joan of Arc*,⁷⁸ perhaps shrouded in those *photogenic, thaumaturgic* and even *psychoanalytic* powers the cinema and the camera lens had assumed for Buñuel (following Epstein, anticipating Bazin)⁷⁹ – reinforce what has been traced elsewhere in the silent cinema as 'the dialectical negation of the illusion of spatial depth by explicitly opposing to it the material flatness of the screen (involving the opposition between what Focillon

76. Bonitzer, 'Le Curé de la Guillotine', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, n 223, Aug-Sept 1970, p 6.

77. Noel Burch and Jorge Dana, 'Propositions', *Afterimage*, 5, Spring 1974, p 43, discussing the 'deconstruction' of the illusions of 'transparency' and 'continuity' represented for the 1920s avant-gardes by 'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari' (1919).

78. See Buñuel's review in Aranda, *op cit*, p 268.

79. See Buñuel, 'Du Plan Photogénique' (1928), *cit.*

calls "space as limit and space as milieu").⁸⁰ Displacing the male and his dream of space, she also displaces his specified milieu, the closed scope of her face the only field for his 'closing' action. That the introduction of the woman should immediately signal the effacement of the co-author/actor, force his condensation, suggests a further ambiguity within that 'violence' in the film widely discussed by previous commentators. That, disfigured, this character should remain unchanging in the film – with her author/co-actor of the 'prologue' disappeared, her other co-actors disappearing by the way – may not be without contribution to the film's desperate, castrated compliment to woman. It might, for instance, provide one reference-point for the stamina of amputee Tristana, the vengeance which is the price she eventually extracts, through another window on the night, in exchange for her crippledom. In the narrative surrealism of *Un Chien Andalou*, the mutilation of the female protagonist is the paradoxical guarantee of her unharmed survival, the doom only of her surgeon, true victim of his reverie.⁸¹

III.6 PROLOGUE, FOREPLAY How we might then use these insights into the syntactic and symbolic paradigms of the 'prologue' to *Un Chien Andalou* to locate the segment in the broader system of the film as a whole is not immediately clear. The introductory title that suggests a fairy-tale ('Once upon a time . . .') turns out to herald a series of time-references which perplex rather than clarify the temporal orchestration of the film. The seeming protagonist disappears after successfully closing down the segment, in an act of unexplained violence, as early as shot 13. His victim, mysteriously colluding in her own disfigurement, re-emerges, on the other hand, to play out the film, impossibly unscathed. The location, too, is left behind, for it is a different chamber and a different balcony which stage central actions in the remainder of the film.

In the face of these insistent divergences, it is then not possible to claim that the 'prologue' directly 'anticipates' or 'foreplays' the body of the text. At best, like the mortal *corrida* of rat and scorpion that prefaces *L'Age d'Or*, it serves only at a certain level of generality to satisfy the rites of narrative exposition, initiating disequilibrium, offence, and lack. Only at a general level can it be considered to permit the thematisation of conflict between male and female which will undeniably recur, in various forms, throughout the film, while it is only within the framework of a special

80. Burch and Dana, op cit, p 44.

81. This is not of course to acquit the cinema of surrealism of the feminist critique applied, in however rudimentary a manner, by William van Wert, in 'Germaine Dulac: First Feminist Filmmaker', *Women and Film*, v 1, nn 5-6, 1974, p 56, nor to suggest that in *Un Chien Andalou* 'the woman' is eventually any less fetishised and enigmatised than in surrealism at large.

104 sub-system of connotation that the film will resume its foregrounding of issues over 'eyesight' and 'point-of-view' (see section III.5 above). Its musical accompaniment, recurring in variations throughout the film in opposition to fragments from the *Liebested* from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, is hardly a sufficient binding factor, except at its own structural level, in the face of this disintegration.

The 'prologue' to *Un Chien Andalou* is thus no cryptographic 'prophecy', no straightforward 'dream-prologue'. Teleological readings of the segment, based on organicist attitudes to the whole film, thus bypass extremely complex questions over textual motivation and derivability. Perhaps, in fact, *Un Chien Andalou* goes so far as to *commence* with one of those 'digressions' arguably fundamental to the narrative intransitivity of a counter-cinema, its fusion, in shot 13, of pro-filmic 'closure' (the unexpected close-up of the ruined eye) and of syntactic closure (the segment ends, to be recalled only in special fragments) marking a trauma for which the aftermath can provide no retrospection, the neurosis of a narrative excited precisely by its loss of origins?

An example from the cinema of Polanski, who avows a debt for his formation to surrealism and once considered *Un Chien Andalou* the 'true' surrealist film⁸² – may illustrate these problems more directly. As the enigmatic heroine Evelyn Mulwray flees with her daughter/sister from the police and from her father/lover at the end of *Chinatown*, she is shot dead in her flight through the back of the head, the bullet shattering her left eye in its trajectory. The loss of the eye, in a film caught up in a circuit of vision – the world of the private 'eye', opening on the secret pornographic photographs he has taken in order to enlighten a suspicious husband, his major clue in the main drama nothing less than a pair of spectacles – will mark, of course, the closure of the character (Mrs Mulwray dies at the wheel) and of the film (which also shortly ends), but it is a form of closure thoroughly anticipated in terms of the pre-history of the diegesis (the private detective's, Gittes's, stricken memory of his previous unspecified accident and personal loss in *Chinatown*) and its filmic history (displacing the violence committed upon the face of Gittes by the man with the knife – played, like the man with the razor in *Un Chien Andalou*, by the author, Polanski, himself). Though the film ends, it does so in other words precisely to obtain more than the simple logic of hermeneutic solvency – forcing Gittes into the labyrinth of his memories, thus guaranteeing in this circularity the post-filmic extension of these foreclosed mysteries, marking out Polanski's *Chinatown* conspicuously as existential and metaphysical allegory within the 'modernised' *film noir*. I activate this comparison in

82. Roman Polanski, statement, *Etudes Cinématographiques*, nn 40-2, Summer 1965, p 171.

order to distinguish it more sharply from *Un Chien Andalou*, a text which, just as conspicuously, refuses to mystify its protagonist's dementia, refuses to close the 'character' of the 'victim', refuses to close, by working through and contextualising, its founding trauma, the 'prologue'.

III.7 CONCLUSION (2) The mundane effect of these dis-intrications is once more to correct traditional misrecognitions of the narrative and diegetic space of *Un Chien Andalou*. There is no evidence, for instance, other than the scenario, to support the claim that the protagonist spies the moon from the bedroom, and he does not stand upon the balcony until he has stepped out there, a transition to a new location omitted in at least two published synopses of the 'prologue'.⁸³ Here the insistence of the scenario evades even the revision of Buñuel's biographer and his English editor/translator.⁸⁴ Further, there are no grounds, as we have seen, for assuming that the woman is 'located' on the balcony, while it is to incorrectly psychologise and dramatise the cool interpersonal violence of the 'prologue' to assume emotional and erotic relationship between the characters.⁸⁵ The 'space' of the 'prologue', as we have argued, cannot be confined within these 'realist' parameters, and consequently it is also incorrect to imagine that the segment can be compressed into the terms of the conventional diegetic synopsis.⁸⁶

The 'prologue' to *Un Chien Andalou*, the film's most mercurial and most notorious segment, is in other words illusory as thematic overture. Its partial thematic momentum apart – in its quest for the exterior, and for the eye of the woman – the narration is perturbed, unreconciled, suspending. Foregrounding its ellipses and lacunae, emphasising rather than repressing the implications of off-screen space and time, the 'prologue' nonetheless trades on the *effet de récit* in its simultaneous designation and occulta-

83. Respectively: Durnat, op cit, p 23, and Beverle Houston, Marsha Kinder, *Close-Up*, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972, p 41; Anon, 'Un Chien Andalou', *Monthly Film Bulletin*, v 35 n 419, Dec 1968, p 205, and Cowie, loc cit; Durnat, ibid, and Kinder, Houston, ibid.

84. Aranda, op cit, p 60.

85. Respectively: Arthur Knight, *The Liveliest Art*, New York, New American Library, 1959, p 105, José de la Colina, 'La Agonia del Amor Romántico', *Nuevo Ciné*, nn 4-5, Nov 1961, p 15, Burch, op cit, p 125; J Howard Lawson, *Film: The Creative Process*, New York, Hill & Wang, 1964, p 232, Aranda, 'Surrealist and Spanish Giant', *Films and Filming*, v 8 n 1, Oct 1961, p 17.

86. Some of the problems over the synopsis of non-narrative films are reflected in the case of *Un Chien Andalou* by the work of Sitney, 'Visionary Film', cit, pp 3-5, and Hans Scheufl, Ernst Schmidt, Jr., *Eine Subgeschichte des Films: Lexicon des Avantgarde- Experimental- und Undergroundfilms*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1974, v 1, p 120.

106 tion of the narrative 'event'. An actor is produced, yet progressively unsituated, masked, dismissed, yet vestigially remaindered; the generous space available within the diegesis contracts within the claustrophobic 'utopia' of eyeline close-ups. The familiar spectatorial experience of aggression against his or her own eyes is thus only partly explicable by the film's play on the mirror-status of the screen – it must first be related to the viewer's preliminary and continuing experiences of suspension and dispersal in the 'prologue'.

Hence the *polyvalency* of *Un Chien Andalou*, its varied sites of productivity perhaps only attainable via metaphors of dialogism, polytopism, or stereophony, strategies whose centrality within surrealist aesthetics are ably demonstrated for another text in Laurent Jenny's dissection of the verbal paragrammatism of part of Breton's *Soluble Fish*.⁸⁷ The repertory of these dislodging figures in the cinema of surrealism, their promiscuity camouflaged by the mock-classicism of partial continuities, is the target of these pages in their outline of questions over textual space in respect of Buñuel and Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou*. This is not, it should be stressed in closing, to collapse the ideological significance of *Un Chien Andalou* into its repertory of aesthetic 'play', especially against the larger context of a movement itself conspicuous for the idealism of its political consideration and engagements. Unlike Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*, for instance, its contemporary within a different avant-garde, *Un Chien Andalou* attempts no reconstruction of the contemporary social formation, since the French film is at work within the ideologically more fully 'mediated' genre of narrative-dramatic fiction. The dismantling of received ideological 'positions' for *Un Chien Andalou*, and a clearer delineation of this dimension of the work of the film, are returned to in more detail in the larger study of which this article is part.

Note on Print Availability

The extreme textual density of *Un Chien Andalou* evidenced in this study prompts us to remind readers of the ready (and cheap) availability of 16mm and 35mm prints for rental through Contemporary Films Ltd, 55 Greek St, London, W1. North American readers are additionally fortunate in being able to obtain, over and above rented prints, cheap but not always reliable prints for purchase, on both 16mm and super-8mm, through a number of American film sales agencies.

87. Jenny, *op cit*.

All shots separated by cuts unless otherwise stated.

Segment 1: Shots 1-13

- 1 First title: *Il était une fois . . .*
- 2 Fade-in. Bare arms and hands (man's) entering frame right, strop razor on strop attached to door-handle left. Camera looking down, at obtuse angle to window, strop at right-angle to window.
- 3 Head-and-shoulders semi-frontal shot of man in front of other window, cigarette in mouth, looking down and off-screen right.
- 4 Similar to 2. Hands take razor and test it on nail.
- 5 Similar to 3. Man smiles, grimaces.
- 6 Medium square shot of man left-profile left against windows with proscenium curtains. He examines strop, then razor, opening doors to go outside.
- 7 Longer square shot of balcony on to which man has just emerged, from opposite. He looks around him, and out across balcony, seeming to continue to test razor on thumb before stropping with hands on parapet.
- 8 Head-and-shoulders three-quarter right-profile of man as he raises head to look upwards.
- 9 Long-shot of darkened sky with moon distant left, approached by slivers of horizontal cloud from right.
- 10 Similar to 8, man stirring.
- 11 Square close-up of woman's face, man half-glimpsed to her left (screen right), using left hand to open her left eye. When he does so, his right hand enters frame with razor and goes to draw razor across eye. Man now wearing striped tie.
- 12 Similar to 9, but moon sliced by cloud.
- 13 Close-up of eye, held open by fingers, slit by razor, exuding jelly.

Segment 2: shots 14-24

- 14 Second title: *Huit ans après.*
- 15 Fade-in. Long-shot down city street left, from pavement. Corner of large building square opposite. Cyclist enters frame bottom right, wearing cap and apron. He cycles down street left, on left-hand side, into distance.
- 16 Long-shot of another street running left foreground to right distance. Cyclist appears right-centre, on right-hand side of street, travelling left. As he approaches frame left, dissolve.
- 17 Frontal shot of cyclist cycling down one side of another street, now seen to be wearing a striped box round his neck, camera tracking back with him, panning slightly to keep him in frame.
- 18 Tracking shot forward down street similar to shot 15.
- 19 Similar to shot 17, but camera lower, cutting head of cyclist, and showing handlebars.
- 20 Similar to 18. Dissolve.
- 21 Back-view of cyclist, bolero and skirt visible white over street. Other elements of his body, and background, do not become visible, and although he appears to be pedalling, camera remains static. Dissolve.
- 22 Long-shot down city-street, large building left, park right. Cyclist rides from fore-ground down street into distance. Dissolve remains as super-imposition until cut.
- 23 Medium shot across street foreground to left distance, park-railings opposite, cyclist wobbling across from left towards camera, camera panning slightly to frame, and down to box as he approaches. Dissolve.

This segment displaces the man with the razor, the apparent 'victor' of the 'prologue', by introducing the figure who will in fact be the main male protagonist, who appears in three forms: in this transitional or travestied form, as part of the film's play with sexual identity and travesty, as he does again in segment 9; without the additional female dress, as he does more frequently throughout the film; and in 'doubled' form, as he does in segment 10. The proairetic details of this segment are less inscrutable than those of the action in the 'prologue'. In its use of the 'journey' trope, the segment provides the film's most substantial exterior urban sequence, although it is a journey which is in itself, and in terms of its destination, no more important than the burden of the traveller for it is upon a close-up of the box that he carries that the segment closes and fades out. Marked off by fades at either end, the segment would appear to be constructed, syntagmatically speaking, as an ordinary sequence, with shots unsystematically separated either by cuts (after 15, 17, 18, 22) or by dissolves (after 16, 20, 21, 23). At moments, however, the punctuation devices appear to be deployed in order to work against the narrative momentum. In shot 22, the dissolve is in fact retained as a superimposition, taking up the emphasis, via silhouette, placed upon the costume of the cyclist by the composition of shot 21, perhaps anticipating the hermeneutic foregrounding of the costume later in the film. It is worth noting, in addition, that while the precise relative geography of streets travelled by the cyclist in this segment is not possible to ascertain, shot 19, which does appear to continue the location introduced in 17, ironically implies that the cyclist is less advanced along the street than in the earlier shot. These two reflexes – the *abstraction* and *critique* of diegetic space – are already familiar to us from the 'prologue' and will be increasingly invoked in the remainder of the film.

Segment 3: shots 25-44

- 25 Fade-in. Square-shot of bed-sittingroom. woman seated at table in centre foreground, reading, across table, from an empty chair. She is recognisable as the young woman of the 'prologue'. There is a bed background left, a curtained full-length window centre background. Dissolve.
- 26 Frontal waist-shot of woman reading, left, door behind her, cabinets in view right distance. She looks up and off to her left, screen right.
- 27 Frontal medium-shot of street and building opposite, cyclist entering frame left and exiting frame right, shot opening and closing with frame-entry and frame-exit.
- 28 Similar to the end of 26, woman more alert, throws down book.
- 29 Close-up of book falling on to table, revealing a left-hand page of print, and a right-hand full-page reproduction of Vermeer's *The Lacemaker* centre frame.
- 30 Similar to 28. Camera pans up and right as woman rises and crosses room, exiting frame right on cut.
- 31 Medium-shot of woman entering frame right, camera panning left with her, stopping as she draws lace to look through window, starting back.
- 32 Long-shot down into street running left foreground to right background, diagonal emphasised by shadow left, pavement right, camera panning slowly to follow cyclist from top of frame to middle.
- 33 Similar to 31, woman taking lace once more, starting back in apparent anger.

- 34 Vertical long-shot down on to street, frame divided diagonally – roadway left, pavement right. Cyclist entering frame top right rides to centre frame and topples off bicycle on to pavement.
- 35 Woman turns in annoyance away from window, muttering to herself, then turns to move lace once more.
- 36 Vertical shot of fallen cyclist from position which diametrically reverses 34.
- 37 Similar to 35, woman muttering at window.
- 38 Square long-shot of room, slightly closer than in 35, woman at window turns and walks defiantly towards bed.
- 39 Woman moves from bed to door, camera panning left in mid-shot to follow her, stopping as she opens door and exits.
- 40 Close shot across prostrate cyclist, head on pavement behind.
- 41 Slightly left mid-shot of door at top of steps, which opens for woman to descend out of frame past camera right foreground.
- 42 Closer shot of cyclist, who has rolled over on to his back, the box moving position to suit.
- 43 Slightly left mid-shot of doorway, woman exiting to stand, clutch her hands in apparent anguish, then running to crouch bottom frame left.
- 44 Medium shot, slightly left, of cyclist, woman holding his head in her hands to kiss him numerous times. Doorstep visible in background. Dissolve.

This segment re-introduces the female protagonist of the 'prologue', and stages her first encounter with the major male protagonist, already introduced in the previous segment. In this respect the segment clearly surprises our assumption, following the action of the 'prologue', that the injury there inflicted upon the eye of the woman must expel her from the remainder of the fiction, even if, as the first inter-title implies, we have now been propelled eight years on from the 'prologue' (shot 14). The enigma over the disappearance of the man with the razor, who will not in fact return at all in the course of the film, is here played off against the enigma of the woman, who has returned against all logical odds. Her encounter with the cyclist has three stages, themselves enigmatically inter-constructed. To begin with, it is imaginary; the image of the cyclist in shot 27, syntactically organised as a seeming point-of-view shot for the look of the woman in the surrounding shots (26 and 28), can only be imaginary since as will be shortly confirmed (31 and 32), the room in which she is found is at a higher level than the street itself, whereas this illusory 'point-of-view' series planifies the differing locations to the same (ground) level. The second stage of her encounter with the cyclist is made up of the series of apparently 'real' views of the cyclist in the street below, through the windows, expressed in the apparent alternating syntagm 31-37 – although, again, the eyelines of the viewer, and of the 'subjective' inserts, do not match. The third stage of the encounter is the woman's rescue of the cyclist from the street, where the disjunctions are this time 'psychological' rather than spatio-syntactical. The girl's reaction to the cyclist's arrival, observed from the window, is clearly one of muttered disapproval (33, 35, 37), yet when she descends to the street, her reaction is one of affection and concern (43, 44). The segment thus sets up a chain of queries on the woman's relationship to the cyclist, while an additional enigma is raised over the cyclist himself, whose unexplained collapse from his machine leads to his unconsciousness (40-44), and, as the opening of the subsequent segment seems to suggest, his disappearance and the woman's mourning for him, her watchful attempts to reanimate his vertiges by the power of her gaze (45-63). We can fit these puzzles into the film's overarching concern with the structure of its 'character-relationships',

- 110 but enigmas are also installed here at more local levels. A reproduction of Vermeer's *The Lacemaker*, for instance, is revealed (29) as part of the woman's reading-matter – an image linked, in terms of the costume of the figure represented, to the dress of the cyclist himself, and in this sense retrospectively 'contextualising' the 'imaginary' view of the cyclist apparently perceived by the woman two shots previously (27). *The Lacemaker*, the film's most explicit iconographic reference, does not reappear once it has provided this enigmatic cross-reference. As we might expect from the evidence of the previous segments, the 'psychological' fluctuations of 'character' within the segment are stirred by the occasional formal discontinuity. Following the master-shot 26, which is separated from the remainder of the segment by a dissolve, all that prevents the series 26-37 from being construed as a syntagm alternating seer (the woman) and seen (the cyclist) are three interventions: the 'explanatory' insert of *The Lacemaker* (29); the friction between shots 30 and 31, both pan-shots covering the woman's passage across the room, the redundancy of 31 justified entirely by the shock of change in human movement and in camera-direction, left to right (30)/right to left (31); the inversion, on its repetition, of the shot of the fallen cyclist (end of 34, 36). Discontinuity at the pro-filmic level will be repeated between shots 40 and 42, where the apparently unconscious cyclist will not only succeed in altering his position on the pavement, but also the position of the box.

Segment 4: shots 45-63

- 45 Close-up of box being held in left hand against black background. Ringed and braceleted right hand enters frame left to unlock box, open it and remove diagonally striped packet.
- 46 Medium shot of woman at bedside, holding packet in right hand with left hand putting box down, taking collar from bed, removing tie from collar, and unwrapping diagonally striped tie to replace it, camera wavering and panning slightly with her, stopping while she inserts new tie. She goes to place new collar and tie on bed.
- 47 Medium close-up along bed of bib and apron, hands descending from top left to pose collar and tie, camera wavering to frame, edge of box just visible bottom left, camera tracking back along bed, wavering, to follow hands adjusting box and second skirt. Flash-frame effect.
- 48 Waist-shot across bed of woman sweeping foot of bed with right hand, looking over her work, camera wavering and then panning left, right, as she comes round foot of bed to sit in chair which she has drawn up diagonal to bed.
- 49 Diagonal medium shot of bed, but not point-of-view following 48.
- 50 Jump-cut as open collar and tie magically close and knot.
- 51 Medium shot of woman in chair, seen in left-profile frontally from bed beside chair.
- 52 As 49. Dissolve.
- 53 As 50.
- 54 Head-and-shoulders shot of woman, three-quarter left-profile looking left. She blinks, looks off-screen, right, and turns for a better look.
- 55 Medium-shot of man (the cyclist without frills), left-profile, left hand on hip, leaning forward to inspect right hand held up in front of face. Door left background, wall right.
- 56 Forearm right bottom corner to hand top left. Ants crawl in the palm. The door is now somehow visible left background.
- 57 As 55.

- 58 Mid-shot of woman, who has now turned in her chair right-profile to look off-screen right. A door is now visible behind her, right background. She rises.
- 59 Longer version of 55 and 57. Man's hand does not now overlap door. Lamp and drawers visible right. Woman leaves chair left foreground - slightly turned, unexpectedly, to its right - to approach man.
- 60 Medium shot of man three-quarters right-profile left, woman three-quarters left-profile right, another door now visible on far wall behind her.
- 61 Diagonal close-up of palm, crawling with ants which are emerging from a hole in the centre of the palm.
- 62 As 60. Woman looks at man's face. He turns head to look at her. She looks back at his hand, as does the man.
- 63 As 61. Dissolve.

The fourth segment presents action unified in terms of time and place, but falling into two distinct sub-sections as far as narrative organisation is concerned. Between shots 45 and 54 the woman, who has now returned to the room, lays out the cyclist's costume on the bed and replaces the existing tie with one taken from a packet inside the cyclist's box, which she commences the segment by opening. Shot 45, the introductory close-up of the box being opened, thus 'rhymes' with shot 24, the close-up of the box arriving at the end of the cyclist's journey, closing segment 2. Segment 3 is thus 'suspended' in the interval or digression between these two close-ups of the box. The reward for the woman's reconstruction of the cyclist, and for her bedside vigil, is the 'magical' closure of the collar, and knotting of the tie, via a jump-cut between shots 49 and 50, although it should be noted that the apparent point-of-view shots 49/50, 52, 53, do not correlate with the position established for the woman in relation to the bed (48). The second 'half' of the segment commences midway through shot 54, when the woman is evidently surprised to discover the man studying his open hand in a nearby corner of the room. This sub-segment therefore serves to identify the woman's gaze (first directed at the man) with the man's gaze itself (directed at the hand), which is achieved in shot 62 so that the segment can close upon the climax of these 'views': a diagonal close-up of the man's hand emitting a swarm of ants from a crater in its centre (63). The segment as a whole thus effects a series of displacements. The fallen cyclist of segment 3 is seemingly abandoned, only to be rediscovered, and as it were re-produced, later in the segment - while his reassembled and intermittently animated costume upon the bed, currently effaced by his bodily presence, will itself re-emerge, with him inside it, several segments on (segment 8). Introduced only at the end of the segment, to be effaced by a complex transition to a new segment, the hand filled with ants will itself recur at the same time (segment 8). It should come as no surprise within the second half of this segment if the location for the unexpected guest should comprise in passing representations of the decor of the room difficult to reconcile from shot to shot (see descriptions for shots 55, 56, 58, 59, 60).

Segment 5: shots 64-65

- 64 Close-up of woman's arm-pit, arm exiting frame left, head obscured by bonnet top frame, swim-suit right. Earth (sand ?) just visible left bottom. Dissolve.
- 65 Vertical mid-shot of urchin on sand centre-bottom frame, human footprint horizontal above it. Dissolve.

These two shots are among the most difficult to locate within the film, in spite of the consecutive dissolves which merge shots 63/4, 64/5 and

- 112 65/6. Here the triple-dissolve connects at least two distinct segments (5: 45-63 and segment 6: 66-105) but also takes in on the way an obscure two-shot syntagm designated here as segment 5: shots 64-5. Indeed, it can be argued that the two shots joined in this segment do not even inter-relate sufficiently to allow them to be paired and inserted as dual inter-segmental 'wedge'. Neither shot has any continuity, except tangentially and at long range, with either previous or future action. The armpits of shot 64 may 'anticipate' the heroine's armpit from which to her horror, the male protagonist magically transfers her hair to his mouth (shots 278-80), while the cap worn by the unidentifiable character of shot 64 would appear to be identical to that which hangs upon the tennis-racket in a corner of the room most clearly visible in shot 130. The urchin and the footprint of 65, likewise, have no continuity with 64 except by continuity of assumed background (the sand upon which the figure appears to lie in shot 64). In this respect, it is possible to claim that shots 64 and 65 anticipate the location but not the action of the beach-scene much later in the film, where there is no sunbathing, and where what is to be found upon the beach is not an urchin or a footprint, but fragments of the cyclist's clothing first introduced in segment 2. To this extent the narrative status of the two shots 64 and 65 wavers between the non-diegetic and the displaced diegetic, their syntagmatic status equally wavering between the pair of inserts and the two-shot ordinary sequence depending on the unifying force we are prepared to grant their 'setting'.

Segment 6: 66-105

- 66 Darkened screen, apart from small patch of light centre-top frame, revealing vertical overhead shot of figure poking cane at severed hand on ground, heads of other figures just visible in darkness round about.
- 67 Lower vertical shot, figure and hand occupying off-centre of screen in a pool of light.
- 68 Similar to 67, but from position almost as high as for 68. Pool of light now an iris, which opens to reveal a man struggling with a gendarme, part of a crowd of onlookers.
- 69 Mid-shot looking from lower angle across heads of crowd to figure, unperturbed as two gendarmes attempt to disrupt crowd.
- 70 Still closer waist-shot down on figure, waists of crowd visible in background.
- 71 Close-up of severed hand on criss-cross background. Cane touches its little finger, then the severed flesh at the wrist.
- 72 Medium shot of crowd, looking right, gendarme pulling back one man who moves across right to take a closer look.
- 73 As 70.
- 74 Medium shot of crowd, looking left. Gendarme enters frame right to restrain woman extreme left.
- 75 Low-angle waist-shot of woman and four men looking down left.
- 76 Medium shot looking down, figure's legs (wearing woman's shoes) left, severed hand bottom right. Play of light and shadow represents motion of crowd.
- 77 Very low-angle close-shot of man, woman, and two men, looking over camera, buildings visible behind and above them in background.
- 78 Slightly low-angle medium shot of balcony and window, woman left, man right, looking down slightly right. He turns to her, apparently speaking, and then looks back down.
- 79 As 73.
- 80 As 78. Man quivers.

- 81 Medium shot down on figure across foreground heads. Gendarme left foreground turns to figure and salutes. 113
- 82 Waist-shot, gendarme right-profile left, figure left-profile right. Looking towards the figure, he addresses her, and then stoops.
- 83 Oblique vertical shot, frame ringed with heads of onlookers. One gendarme holds back crowd top frame, the other picks up the hand and goes to place it in the box – seemingly the same as the cyclist's – which he is holding in his left hand.
- 84 As 82. Gendarme places hand in box, closes lid, looks at figure.
- 85 Head-and-shoulders shot of figure, three-quarter left profile, receiving box with some emotion, clutching it to breast.
- 86 Closer waist-shot of couple at window. He first, then she, looks up and off, moved.
- 87 As 85.
- 88 As 86. He looks up and away, then down left, she looks down ahead.
- 89 Oblique vertical shot, ring of crowd surrounded by empty street, pavement diagonal left bottom, shadow top right. Gendarme salutes figure with arm to breast, then gendarmes disperse crowd, who move off in all directions, casting strong shadows following diagonals of framing, leaving figure and shadow alone centre-screen, holding box in front.
- 90 Long-shot along street foreground to right background. Figure stands front left foreground, clutching box to chest, looking away right and down. A car enters frame left directly behind her, travels towards distance.
- 91 Head-and-shoulders shot of man at window, looking down intently left, biting lip.
- 92 As 90.
- 93 Interior close-shot of couple at window. Woman right, back turned, man left, right-profile. Man turns to woman, speaks, gesturing with face towards window.
- 94 Similar to 89, but without shadow, only pavement visible left, woman facing right bottom. Car enters bottom frame right, couple scatters back to centre frame, car passes directly behind woman.
- 95 As 91.
- 96 As 94. Figure on pavement bottom left watches, then moves off, car passes woman identically as in 94.
- 97 Waist-shot of woman, turning right-profile to look off right, pavement visible behind. Pedestrians cross behind and in front of woman.
- 98 Square long-shot down centre of street to watch car approaching from background to foreground. This does not appear to be the same street as in 90.
- 99 As 97. Woman catches sight of car.
- 100 Tracking-shot from inside car, camera looking over bonnet-insignia at woman ahead with hands in air, box on ground, as car bears down on her.
- 101 As 99, woman cringing and clutching box.
- 102 Long-shot along street from pavement. Roadway right foreground to left background. Woman left centre, box on ground. Car enters bottom right corner to run down woman.
- 103 As 95. Man evidently excited.
- 104 As 94. Woman prostrate (that is, vertical in terms of screen-surface) bottom frame right, car travels to exit top left. One pair of feet pass on pavement to right. One man enters and goes to body from frame left, another from top right. Another comes in

slowly from top right, and a woman from bottom frame below body.

105 As 93. Man, impassioned, looks off to his right (screen left), and draws lace.

This lengthy segment fulfils various functions. It marks both the introduction, and the expulsion, of the female figure with the severed hand, thus 'containing' her fictional existence. This figure is experienced as sufficiently sexually ambiguous by many commentators, it should be noted, for her to be regarded even as an 'androgynous', in this impression balancing the sexually travestied cyclist of segment 2. The trajectory of this character, from public spectacle to lonely and unobserved victim of a road-accident, sets up a specular tension within the text: she is the object of the public gaze, while her own gaze, preoccupied with the mysteriously severed hand, is abstracted and inverted – in turn caught up in a wider play of 'vision' in the film. It is closed, within this segment, by shot 78, re-introducing the hero and heroine and, in the alternation between shots of them watching at the window (78, 80, 86, 88, 91, 93, 95, 103, 105) and shots of the street, contextualising the street as being located within the purview of the apartment. This delay in the re-introduction of the couple (left behind in shot 63), this recession of onlookers, refers us back along the segment to the introduction of the street-scene it contains. If we return to the previous shot of the couple, we find them again united in the look, staring at the hand emitting ants – a cavity which via the triple-dissolve thus 'produces' the spaces of segments 5 and 6 before being referred back to its source by the re-introduction of the couple in shot 78. The space between their attention to the hand (shot 63) and to the street-scene (shot 78) itself, of course, marks forms of displacement in the narrative: it conceals, for instance, the motivation of their switch in attention from ants to window. Other motifs are more simply circulated: the striped box delivered by the cyclist in segment 2, divulging a tie to contribute to the 'commemoration' of the cyclist in segment 3, recurs here as a receptacle for a severed hand which in turn varies the ant-infested hand of segment 4. Both elements – box, hand – continue to be re-distributed throughout the film, as we shall see. The 'powers' of the box are no less conspicuous than upon its early appearance, in segments 2 and 3. Just as there it is able to alter its position to suit that of its carrier (see descriptions for shots 40 and 42), so here the box can dramatically change place, without diegetic justification (99, 100, 101). Equally, it should be noted, the streets that provided pretexts for discontinuity in segment 2 are no more complete in their uneven coherence here (see shots 90, 98).

Further narrative implications can be disengaged from this segment. Firstly, in the sense that its action is 'contained' between the gazes of the film's protagonists (between shots 63 and 78), its own new and central character introduced and expelled at a stroke, this segment then 'exceeds' the central dramatic relationship whose looks surround and ground it. It thus contributes to the film's alternation between passages continuing the central dramatic relationship between 'hero' and 'heroine', and those 'excessive' passages introducing additional characters who must inevitably be expelled in the same movement (Buñuel himself, the man with the razor in the 'prologue'; here, the girl with the severed hand; the 'double', in segments 9-11). Secondly, the 'accident' in this segment replays and prefigures other deaths within the film. It looks back to the earlier 'accident' in which the cyclist falls without apparent reason from his bicycle to his apparent death, in the same street (segment 3); it looks forward to the death of the 'double' in the park-land of segment 11, which also closes with a

similar emphasis on the reactions of passers-by. Thirdly, in focussing the attention of the protagonist, the accident inspires him to perform a variation on it – his haulage of the ropes/corks/melons/priests/donkeys-pianos towards the ‘heroine’ in the subsequent segment.

115

Segment 7: shots 106-160

- 106 Interior close view of couple at window, opposite to 93. Back-view of man's right side left, woman left-profile right. Although the end of 105 suggests he is now looking at her, he begins this shot still looking out of the window before turning his head to her.
- 107 Similar to 93. Man, left hand behind head, looking at girl right, who is burying her head in the outer curtaining. He addresses her, gesturing with his look out of the window.
- 108 As 106. She looks up at him, speaks nervously, looks down again. He turns to her, and she looks back at him and recoils.
- 109 As 107. Man, leaning forward, looks woman up and down.
- 110 Frontal mid-shot of window and wall right. Man, right-profile left, right hand on hip, woman right-profile centre right. He leans across, clutching her breasts, she pulls back and off-screen right, camera panning slightly, as he follows.
- 111 Panning waist-shot of man, three-quarters right profile, as he looks off right, camera beginning to track back along long wall.
- 112 Tracking and wavering frontal waist-shot of woman as she retreats, looking off left.
- 113 Camera tracks back, panning to follow man in waist-shot, three-quarters right-profile, down long wall past door.
- 114 Camera tracks on woman as she moves back along wall, wavering slightly, as man comes into frame left and moves round her to pinion her against wall beside table. He follows, and again jumps ahead of her to pinion her against the wall. Camera stops, then pans right, as he moves forward, with her retreating, to seize her breasts again.
- 115 Close shot of woman's torso, the breasts kneaded by the man's hands. She forces them away.
- 116 Waist shot of man, right-profile left, with woman left-profile centre-right fighting him off, then staring angrily at him. He looks at her breasts, grins, and as her own look melts' begins to knead her breasts once more. She turns her head to the wall in seeming pleasure.
- 117 Close shot of torso from woman's left-hand side. Dissolve.
- 118 As 11, but hands now kneading breasts on naked torso.
- 119 Low-angle close-up of man's head, woman's head partly visible bottom-right corner of frame. Man's head is raised, eyeballs rolled upwards, saliva running to chin from right corner of mouth.
- 120 As 118. Dissolve.
- 121 As 117.
- 122 Similar to 119, but at slightly different angle. Man's head lowered.
- 123 As 121. Dissolve.
- 124 Similar to 123, but hands now kneading buttocks on naked torso. Dissolve.
- 125 As 123.
- 126 Similar to 122, but at a slightly different angle. Man's face now looking down at woman, mouth puckering, beginning to smile.
- 127 As 116. Woman looks off to her left, screen-right, then angrily pushes man out of frame left, and runs out of frame right.
- 128 Long-shot down room (no sign of chair facing bed, or of door behind bed). Man chases from right corner background round furniture in foreground as woman escapes into left corner back-

- ground between bed and wall.
- 129 Medium-shot panning right as woman clambers across bed, camera stopping on view of window as she exits frame right, panning left again to pick up man clambering across bed, panning right with him again to catch woman in corner, defending herself with a chair.
- 130 Medium shot of woman in corner, looking down long wall, grabbing tennis racket with right hand from wall left and raising it above her head.
- 131 Long shot of woman in corner, right background, racket raised, man facing her with back to audience in centre frame.
- 132 Head-and-shoulders shot of man, tracking backwards, wavering.
- 133 As end of 130.
- 134 As 132, briefly, until man and camera stop.
- 135 Waist-shot version of 133, woman breathing heavily.
- 136 As 132, man becoming uncertain and glancing off down and left.
- 137 As 135.
- 138 Waist-shot version of 136. Man looks off left (screen right), feels in breast pocket, looks off right (screen left), looks backwards to his right, looks triumphantly forward, moves right and backwards, looks up once more in triumph, stoops down out of frame, camera panning down slightly as he does so.
- 139 Close shot down along carpeted floor. Man on hands and knees, a rope in left hand. He feels about with right hand as though to find another, looking up as though to check she is still there.
- 140 As 137. Woman gasps as though in horror.
- 141 Long shot across room, woman in left corner. Man gets to his feet and pulls on ropes, bringing into view a pair of large flat rectangles attached to the ropes, but he is braked and floored by the unexpected resistance of what he is pulling. He looks round and rises once again, turning back to the woman to make another effort, this time with ropes over his shoulders. He glances back a couple of times between efforts to get moving.
- 142 Square medium shot across room, door partly visible left, table partly visible right. The man's head enters the frame right and he staggers across the frame, stumbling, bringing a large round object into view after the rectangles.
- 143 As 137. Woman lowers racket, gasping as though in horror.
- 144 Continuation of 142. Man hardly progresses, though two spheres are now visible.
- 145 Long shot down room over keyboards and lids of two grand pianos, side by side, the lid of each of which is propped open by a dead donkey with its head on the keyboard, seemingly attached to the ropes leading on to the man and to the woman in the far right corner of the room. Beyond the pianos the heads of two priests can just be made out, as though they are lying on the floor.
- 146 Close shot down on to a piano keyboard and the bloody head of a mule that it bears, moving jerkily away from camera. The donkey's head appears to have an extra jawbone set in the side of its face.
- 147 As 145, the man looking back at his load.
- 148 As 142. The woman appears to have dropped her racket, and cringes back against her left-hand wall, then turns to hide in corner.
- 149 As 144.
- 150 Close shot down on to two priests, supine on floor, hands folded across middles, being apprehensively towed backwards.
- 151 High shot down on to the man as he struggles for a footing, and

- the priests, who appear to be helping the load along with their feet, as the load passes the table. 117
- 152 Head-and-shoulders shot of woman as she turns from the corner, only to give another gasp.
- 153 As 146.
- 154 As 150.
- 155 As 151.
- 156 As 147.
- 157 Medium shot across room, further left than in shot 144. Woman now visible in corner left. Man wildly pulling, but only the rectangles are visible.
- 158 Close shot of woman, head and shoulders left, looking left (screen right), and exiting frame right.
- 159 Same camera position as in 157. Woman is exiting through door. Man throws off ropes to chase her. He runs into wall left of door. and can only put hand through door, which is closed on him.
- 160 Head-and-shoulders rear-view of man as he holds his head in pain.

Appendix

'Dalian' Iconography and 'Un Chien Andalou', shots 130-160

The following simplified information may be useful as a background to discussion of the problems of traditional 'iconographic' approaches to analysis of segment 7 in section II.3 above.

'DONKEYS' AND 'PIANOS'

Dali's apparent responsibility for the mise-en-scène of the segment (see section I.1 above) does not make any simpler the theoretical issues involved in attempts at 'iconographic' analysis of the segment. Reinforcing the theoretical reservations expressed in II.3 above, the following notes are intended to suggest the difficulty constructing Dalian 'contexts' for two of the most conspicuous elements of the protagonist's burden in the segment – the pair of donkeys and grand pianos – and for some of the putatively 'Dalian' stylistics of the mise-en-scène.

The dead and putrefying donkey, possibly an icon drawn from Spanish rural life (see note 27) is visible – peripherally and sometimes even spectrally – in Dali's paintings as early as 'Senecitas' (1926), 'Apparatus and Hand' (1927) and 'Blood is Sweeter than Honey' (1927), a painting seemingly alluded to by the lyricism of one contemporary reviewer (Eugenio Montes, quot in Dali, *The Secret Life*, cit, p. 212). It is an icon which can equally be discovered in Dali's verbal art, where the 'putrid' donkey features in a number of the 1927-8 poems (see Morris, op cit, pp 121 and 168). Perhaps Dali's most striking manipulation of the image, interesting not only for its connection with 'Un Chien Andalou' and 'L'Age d'Or' but for its evidence of the surrealists' confused contemporary interests in psychoanalysis, occurs in the 1930 prose text 'L'Ane Pourri', which rhetorically adumbrates a supposed relation between 'paranoia' and the perception of double and multiple images (in 'Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution', n 1, July 1930, pp 11-12).

Pianos on the other hand become frequent icons in Dali's painting rather later than 'Un Chien Andalou', largely in the period 1931-6

118 with such paintings as 'Six Apparitions of Lenin on a Pianoforte' (1931), 'Invisible Harp' (1934), 'Skull with its Lyric Appendage Leaning on a Night Table Which Should Have the Temperature of a Cardinal's Nest' (1934), and 'Three Young Surrealist Women Holding in their Arms the Skins of an Orchestra' (1936). 'Sodomy Committed by a Skull with a Grand Piano' (1934) is particularly and perhaps influentially reminiscent of 'Un Chien Andalou', as we have already pointed out (see note 23).

THE 'REPETITIVE' FORM, 'ANATOMICAL SURREALISM' AND COLLAGE
Dali's inclusion of 'repetitive' forms within his paintings – nowhere, it should be stressed, as conspicuously as in the large-scale examples of 'twinning' to be found in the segment under analysis – is discussed by James Thrall Soby, *Salvador Dali*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1946, p 21. This propensity is of course to be distinguished from Dali's related play with the double or multiple image – in which a single figuration simultaneously embodies two or more distinct visual constructs – as discussed by Soby, *ibid*, pp 18-21, a category extended to include the Dalian anamorphic image by William S Rubin, *Dada and Surrealist Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1969, pp 231-2. Against the background of Dali's abiding preoccupation with 'anatomical' surrealism, Soby, *op cit*, pp 14-15, attributes his fascination with bone-structures – chiefly cephalic, and climaxing in the period 1933-4 – to his familiarity with Picasso's work in these materials. On the related question of self-portraiture as discussed within the segment, Rubin, *op cit*, p 220, argues that Dali portrays himself, in explicit or attenuated form, in most of his 1929-30 paintings.

As far as the 'machine' can be seen as a piece of 'collage', it is worth noting Soby's suggestion, *op cit*, p 6, that the outcome of Dali's encounter with Picasso's 'lack of reverence for traditional media' – in particular the example of his collages – was Dali's execution, on his return to Spain from a trip to Paris in 1928, of 'several huge abstract canvases from which stones and all manner of heavy objects were suspended by thick cords'. Dali's own fertile memories do not clarify exactly what Picasso showed him of his work during their encounter (*The Secret Life*, p 206; *The Unspeakable Confessions*, pp 74-5), but it seems likely that the work he went on to produce represents the same series of twenty collage-reliefs on white backgrounds, 'most of which were subsequently thrown away because his parents "saw absolutely nothing in them except a few stones, a few pieces of rope, and some tiny ideographic signs"' (Rubin, *op cit*, p 218). The 'ropes' which hold together the heterogeneity of the 'machine' in the segment may take on fresh connotations in the light of this information.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

The theoretical difficulties I outline can be exemplified by reference to previous studies. The only significant attempt to specify iconographic inter-textuality in the case of 'Un Chien Andalou' remains, as far as I am aware, Sylvia Harvey's discussion of the links between the film and the work of Poe, Epstein, Ernst, Péret, Magritte, Dali, Man Ray, Tzara and Picabia (*Dada and Surrealist Experiments in the Cinema, 1923-1930*, Diploma Dissertation, Univ. Edinburgh, June 1971, v 1, pp 52-60). But many of the parallels are tenuous. Of the ten drawings and paintings cited, all but three post-date the film, suggestive of its influentiaity rather than of its receptivity. Of the three works cited older than the film, and hence potential progenitors for aspects of its iconography, the theme of sexual attack rewarded by punishment seems the least specific, confusing Magritte's 'murderer' in 'The

Threatened Assassin' (1926) with the would-be seducer in the film. The potential 'sources' for aspects of 'Un Chien Andalou' in the severed hand of Magritte's 'La Traversée Difficile' (1922) and in Dalí's infested donkey-corpses in 'Blood is Sweeter than Honey' (1927) seem the only links of any strength.

Usually, the process of cross-reference is still more general. Thus the eye-slitting of the 'prologue' has been related, on the basis of what are in fact differing motifs of incision, to Ernst's 1922 painting, 'Oedipus Rex' (Stanley Kauffmann, *Figures of Light: Film Criticism and Comment*, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, p 234) and with a wider range of lacerated eyes among the Spanish surrealists (Morris, op cit, pp 115-18). Lippard's catalogue of Dalí's 'contributions to the film's imagery' does not name textual ensembles (paintings, poems), but isolated iconographic elements, themselves unplaced within the textuality of the film itself (Lippard, op cit, p 101). Most diffusely, there is the tendency to ground the film in the most general of surrealist thematics, to attach it, along with other works, to such concepts as 'Revolution', 'Automatism', 'The Marvellous', etc (Toby Mussman, 'Early Surrealist Expression in the Film', *Film Culture*, n 41, Summer 1966, pp 8-17). It is then to be only slightly more specific to argue shared aesthetic principles, so that a conflation of Breton's 'fortuitous juxtaposition' and Artaud's 'objective chance' is made the basis for the film's stylistics (Elisabeth H. Lyon, 'Luis Buñuel: The Process of Dissociation in Three Films', *Cinema Journal*, v 13 n 1, Autumn 1973, pp 45-8), or such procedures as montage, automatic writing, and the 'cadavre exquis' (Sadoul, *Histoire du Cinéma Mondial*, 5th ed, Paris, Flammarion, 1959, p 190). As I argue in II.3 above, the associationist method evidenced by these examples misreads the *historicity* and *textuality* of the filmic system of 'Un Chien Andalou'.

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' However, not all of *Screen's* Editorial Board are convinced that the uses of psychoanalytic concepts exemplified by the articles we publish in this number can contribute to the development of a knowledge of film in the sense for which SEFT established *Screen*. The following reservations could be mentioned. Firstly, that as an area of applied psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic studies of film will remain tributary to psychoanalysis proper in two respects: any knowledge produced will remain dependent for its authority on a practice outside film study itself, ie on clinical analysis; and that knowledge will be of more value as corroboration of the theses of psychoanalytic theory than for its contribution to any understanding of the cinema. Secondly, that the type of readings of film encouraged by this use of psychoanalytic theory will relapse into a new form of practical criticism, substituting the dubious values with which psychoanalysis has been invested, if it did not originally imply them, for Leavisite notions of a coherent cultural tradition. And thirdly, that the esoteric way the articles drawing on these developments of psychoanalysis have been presented in *Screen* represents a lack of real engagement with the politico-cultural issues which should form the context of *Screen's* work ' (*Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer 1975).

Thus the editorial of the number in which appeared 'The Imaginary Signifier' by Christian Metz. The startling suddenness of the appearance on this side of the Channel of the concepts which informed the Metz article partly explains why we weren't all lining the route from Hastings to welcome them in, and why some people interpreted their intentions as hostile.

Rosalind Coward and John Ellis's *Language and Materialism* (London, RKP 1977) aims to give an account of the background of these concepts and to show what contribution they can make to Marxist thought. Their ancestors, the founding concepts in Saussure's linguistic science, are described, followed by an account of their role in the development of structuralism and in the early work of semiology including the analysis of literature 'both in its ideology of realism and its systematic nature as text and as narrative'.

A turning point for concepts in semiology was Barthes's *S/Z*, a structural analysis of Balzac's *Sarrasine*. The analysis demonstrates that *Sarrasine* is a discourse about language, sexuality and

- 122 economics 'each of which (terms) requires a fixed positionality (addressor-addressee; masculine-feminine; buyer-seller)'. The notion of positionality was important for the development of semiology, and it also has wider implications. The authors show how this notion was related to Althusser's development of a theory of ideology, and how it was further developed by Lacan's work on a materialist theory of the subject based on a re-reading of Freud.

Language and Materialism argues that much work now needs to be done (and fast) to consolidate these theoretical developments and to prevent them being 'taken up in a way that ignores their contribution to a revolutionary understanding of the subject in sociality'. It describes some of the most recent work, and concludes by underlining:

'how the problematic of language has influenced the developments of both Marxism and psychoanalysis in a way that their encounter must necessarily produce a new object of knowledge. This new object is the scientific knowledge of the subject.'

Language and Materialism covers a lot of ground in its 156 pages, so to keep this review in an area relevant to *Screen* I shall take the fears expressed in the quotation from the *Screen* editorial to anchor (but not too tightly) a discussion of the concepts.

(i) 'Firstly, that as an area of applied psychoanalysis. . . .'

First fear: Bourgeois Psychoanalysis. And this fear is not without reason, or without recognition in *Language and Materialism*:

'In turning to psychoanalysis, Barthes and Kristeva were in no way demonstrating their allegiance to psychoanalysis as a bourgeois practice. This contemporary mode of analysis dramatises the limits imposed by sociality in order to return the individual to these limits. Contemporary psychoanalysis thus has a specific ideological character. It is this political pessimism which has provoked the extreme and justifiable hostility from Marxists and, especially, feminists. But Lacan's theoretical work is very different from this form of psychoanalysis. Its ultimate effect is a complete undermining of the notion of a unified and consistent subject, the assumption on which all bourgeois ideology is founded.'

It is important to understand that psychoanalytic concepts were not dragged into semiology by the skin of their teeth in order to add fashionableness or 'profundity'. They were brought in of necessity – and in spite of ideological prejudice against them – to shed light on a particular problem. It was in analysing experimental texts by authors such as Joyce and Mallarmé that semiology's assumptions about the speaking subject and its relation to the system of language became increasingly untenable:

'These texts expose the inadequacy for literature of the model of "communication" (addressor/addressee). Communication can only conceive of an author as source of meaning. But texts like these refuse the possibility of a conventional 'I' behind or outside the text. . . . These texts destroy all unity both of reader and of author. The identity of the subject of the text . . . is dissolved. This dissolution is a function of the fixed system of meanings found in classic representations. . . . Experimental texts demonstrate the productivity of new meanings in the discursive work and, for this reason, they could be seen to be significantly similar to the forms of signification which Freud described. He had shown a form of signification, such as the dream work, that could not be recognised by formal linguistics. The processes of condensation and displacement clearly demonstrate the active function of the signifier in the production of meaning. Meaning, then, is no longer a matter of a pre-given, arbitrary relation between signifier and signified, but rather the fixing of the chain of signifiers to produce a certain meaning.'

The quotations are from an introductory chapter 'The philosophical context' and it should be said that the ideas, no more than sketched in here, are more fully explained in later chapters.

What psychoanalysis offers is a way of grasping the formation of that conventional 'I' that literature usually seems to express and be addressed to. It is proposed that in the young child:

'Relations to social relations are fixed in the same process by which the subject is produced, able to predicate an outside. It is ideology which necessitates the limiting of this relation to a specific predicate: it produces a specific articulation which necessitates a certain subject for its meanings. Positioning takes place in the same process by which the subject enters into language, but is never finally limited to this early stage. Nevertheless, Lacan's psychoanalysis has demonstrated the importance of the sexual and familial in the fixing of ideological discourse, an importance which is intuitively felt, but consistently repressed in Marxist thought.'

The way this process is worked out in theory involves the use of a formidable terminology, some of it sounding (misleadingly) familiar: *phallus*, *castration*, *Oedipus complex*, *repression*, *unconscious*, *demand*, *desire*; some of it more novel: *the Real*, *the Imaginary*, *the Symbolic*. What it adds up to is a different conception of the 'individual' from that of popularised psychoanalytic theory. According to Lacan (following indications in Freud's own writings) it is 'an error to take as unified the phenomenon of consciousness itself'. The assertion that the unconscious participates in thought, for example, bears witness to this lack of unity. This lack of unity of an individual's consciousness displaces tradi-

(ii) 'Psychoanalytic studies of film. . . .'

Second fear: The Production of Worthless Knowledge. The knowledge of traditional epistemologies presupposes a clear separation between subject and object. Recent work (see, for example, Barry Hindess and Paul Q Hirst, *Mode of Production and Social Formation*, London, Macmillan, 1977) has challenged this conception of knowledge, and has stressed the importance of discourse for theory. What can we know of objects in the real world except through discourse, which necessitates the involvement of a subject? Julia Kristeva's work in semiology, outlined in *Language and Materialism*, also challenges this traditional conception of knowledge. She challenges it by questioning the notion of an autonomous subject. In Kristeva's words, quoted in *Language and Materialism*, the idealist problematic presupposes the existence of meaning as 'prior to the appearance of the ego and knowable by it . . . but never calling into doubt the unity of the ego — precisely the guarantee of such knowledge.' According to *Language and Materialism*:

'Kristeva's work is moving towards a theory of revolution as well as being a revolutionary theory. It is a re-examination of ideology and practice from a materialist perspective; and it is the inadequate thinking of these two areas which has constantly returned Marxism to an idealist problematic where subject and object are unresolvably separated.

'These concerns relate directly to contemporary thought in the fields of linguistics, literary criticism, social sciences, political philosophy and psychoanalysis. . . . Materialism can only lose ground if the corrosive influences of bourgeois idealist thought are not eliminated.'

To assume that 'psychoanalytic studies of film' is the kind of knowledge that the use of psychoanalytic concepts will lead to, or will be interested in, is to fall victim to the very ideology with which those concepts are doing battle.

(iii) 'will remain tributary to psychoanalysis proper in two respects. . . .'

Third fear: Loss of Autonomy. This fear has been running all through the grammar of the quotation. The sense is that psychoanalytic studies of film (and note the adjectivalisation of 'psychoanalysis' which, like the 'inflationary wage-claims' phrase so beloved of the media, begs all the questions) are just an 'area', a small part of a larger space, which is occupied by 'applied psychoanalysis proper'. But these subordinations and markings out of space are constructions of the sentence. If 'film studies' are alive and well and claiming autonomy, what space do they

occupy already? What are their theoretical foundations? *Language and Materialism* suggests that the work that has been going on in semiology in France has had a wide reception in Britain. Why? 125

'The flood of translations and of introductions in layman's terms (ie within another conceptual framework, according to another view of the world) is witness to more than just a desire to neutralise this work. It shows that the traditional disciplines of linguistics, cultural criticism and literary criticism (with its cinematic subsidiaries) are dissatisfied with their own methodology and want to import a controlled dose of new concepts that can cope with 'problems' that have arisen. These traditional disciplines appropriate concepts in a piecemeal fashion to paper over their cracks, when in reality the cracks bear witness to the weakness of their theoretical foundations.'

There can be no question of 'applied' psychoanalysis, ie the addition of one thing to another. What is implied by developments in semiology is a complete re-thinking of all traditional disciplines in the human sciences.

- (iv) '... any knowledge produced will remain dependent for its authority on a practice outside film study itself, ie on clinical analysis.'

Fourth fear: The Client Relationship. The historical origins and socio-economic conditions of psychoanalytic practice not only cause prejudice, which *Language and Materialism* recognises, but they may indeed have implications for the theory which is based on that practice. The signification of clinical analysis – the inevitable room-with-couch set, the buying of an expert's time – must react in some way on the theory. This is not discussed in the book, but for me it is a more fundamental worry than the fear expressed in the quotation, that film study will become only a client of psychoanalysis dependent on the support of its expert knowledge.

In the context of a book about language, Rosalind Coward and John Ellis could not be expected to draw the implications of developments in psychoanalytically informed semiology for the understanding of film, but in a paper based on the book which was published in the 1976 *Edinburgh Film Festival Magazine*, Rosalind Coward did just this:

'Film has to be understood as a specific signifying practice; that is, as the process of production of a system of meanings. In other words, the system of signs or images which is the film is not just made up of pre-given relations between those signs before which the individual is passive, but is rather a work or process which produces an articulation. . . . It becomes possible to understand the process of production of an articulation which is film, only by understanding the process by which ideology works

126 to fix a subject of . . . representations of reality, so as to make the subject the place of the meanings.'

The question then arises of the relation of signifying practice to ideology. *Language and Materialism* believes that:

' . . . it is precisely the dialectic between language and ideology that Marxist theories of language have not established. . . . '

' For Marxism, the question of language posed the problem of the subject in two ways. First Marxism asked whether the role of language in the social totality is determined or determining, whether language is superstructural or not. In admitting – as linguistics seemed to insist – that it is neither of these oppositions, Marxism had also to admit the possibility that the theoretical oppositions base/superstructure were inadequate, and that analysis of language was not possible within a rigid and false distinction between the objective (mode of production) and the subjective (individual identity).

' This parallels the second aspect, which involves the movement towards understanding ideology as an articulation. This would be the production of a certain meaning achieved in establishing an identity between signifier and signified. This itself is only produced in the fixing of the subject in relation to the sign.

' . . . we assert that it is only psychoanalysis which has gone any way to analysing the formation of the subject which receives its specific subjectivity in the work of ideology.'

At one point, *Language and Materialism* proposes that the process of language as *signifying practice* is on a par with the economic, political and ideological practices identified by Althusser. Even if it is too precipitous to make such a proposal yet, it is clear that language cannot simply be subsumed to ideology. If ideology were to include language, then ideology would need to be quite radically rethought. In any event, it seems that the fears of 1975 have not been justified and that the knowledge gained from the use of psychoanalytic concepts has not taken away from the political analysis of ideology, but on the contrary considerably strengthened understanding of signifying practice.

- (v) ' . . . and that knowledge will be of more value as corroboration of the theses of psychoanalytic theory than for its contribution to any understanding of the cinema.'

Fifth fear: A Knowledge Drain. But research into language, ' the key to both ideology and to the simultaneous construction of conscious and unconscious ', has made it possible to develop a theory of the way positions are fixed for a subject within a mode of representation. And this knowledge has already made significant contributions to our understanding of texts.

Language and Materialism gives an account of some of ' the

forms of concrete analysis' that this has produced. Much of this analysis has been in French and 127

'on avant-garde texts which by definition can only be comprehended in their original language. It is virtually impossible to "translate" because this notion involves a transference of a "content", a positionality and discourse, from one (neutral) system of signifiers to another. To transfer the sliding of signifiers and the disturbance of positionality involves a difficult task, of writing the whole text anew.'

The analysis which is described at greatest length is Barthes's *S/Z*; an analysis of a classic realist text, but one which nevertheless aims to disturb positionality. The reader of a realist text is a fixity, a consumer, able only to 'accept or reject the text [but] it is none the less possible to see that [classic realist texts] are based on a certain, limited plurality. . . . Conventional criticism aims at a closure of the troubling plurality: it aims at an interpretation, fixing a meaning, finding a source (the author) and an ending, a closure (*the meaning*).'

Barthes's 'liberatory criticism' takes the form of an interrogation of the structuration of a text rather than its structure, and shows realism as a social practice of representation which exploits the plurality of language in a limited way:

'The realist narrative functions to uncover a world of truth, a world without contradictions. . . . Narration . . . sets the subject in place as the point of intelligibility of its activity: the subject is then in a position of observation, understanding, synthesising.'

Or, as it is put at another point: 'The whole process is directed towards the place of a reader: in order that it should be intelligible, the reader has to adopt a certain position with regard to the text.'

As *Language and Materialism* points out:

'Texts which do not depend on placing the subject in this kind of position are as rare in the cinema as in literature itself. . . .'

' . . . It is precisely this relationship of specularity that becomes clear in the analysis of films, hence the importance of magazines like *Screen* which analyse narration in the cinema and the positions for the subject that it includes.'

I quote this not (just) because it says nice things about *Screen* but to show how the use of psychoanalytic concepts in *Screen* have their roots in the work whose development is described in *Language and Materialism*. This makes *Language and Materialism* a useful text for anyone coming new, as I did a short time ago, to *Screen* and the concepts it now presupposes a knowledge of.

Psychoanalytic concepts have helped discover the 'limited

128 plurality' of realist texts, the placing in position of the reader. They have also given us the notion of 'inter-textuality' or the way one realist text relies on the reader's knowledge of others:

'The way in which these forms of realist writing achieve their pre-eminence is by repetition. They are the accepted, normal ways of writing, endlessly diffused across all communication media. Their weight of social accretion, of normality and naturalness, far outweighs what one writer can achieve within them.'

This gives us another way of looking at the cinema industry, and helps to explain why most films made today still belong in some degree to 'the fiction formula':

'Since its birth at the end of the nineteenth century the cinema has, as it were, been snapped up by the Western, Aristotelian tradition of the fictional and representational arts, of *diegesis* and *mimesis*, for which its spectators were prepared . . . by their experience of the novel, of theatre, of figurative painting, and which was thus the most profitable tradition for the cinema industry' (Metz, 'The Imaginary Signifier', *Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer 1975).

(vi) '*Secondly, that the type of readings of film encouraged by this use of psychoanalytic theory will relapse into a new form of practical criticism, substituting the dubious values with which psychoanalysis has been invested, if it did not originally imply them, for Leavisite notions of a coherent cultural tradition.*'

Sixth fear: The Return of Essentialist Criticism. There is, of course, the danger that the radical potential of the use of psychoanalytic concepts will be neutralised by their becoming fashionable in literary/film criticism, leading perhaps to the essentialising of the text, a relapse into an intuitive or a poetics analysis, or to essentialist studies of 'the human character', to psychobiography. Although it is unlikely that there will be a return to the 'Why did Hamlet . . . ?' era, there could, as Metz has pointed out, be a more sophisticated version of psychobiography which, for example, analyses films as symptoms of their directors' neuroses. This is, however, less a product of the psychoanalytic concepts themselves than of their utilisation within a film studies still dominated by literary-historical methodologies. An attention to television, which is free from the traditions of literary/film studies, and which is generally recognised as collective effort rather than the work of individual auteurs, would provide an opportunity for the theorising of signifying practice which would make clearer its distance from any kind of essentialist criticism.

The use of psychoanalytic concepts has shifted the emphasis from what a text means to how it means, and can show how

positions are set up for the viewer of television programmes both narrative and 'documentary'. Such an analysis, besides the limitations of the 'content' or 'preferred reading' analyses, for which television itself is never brought into question, also demonstrates the urgency of understanding the process of production of a system of meanings which is the business of television. 129

Avant-garde texts have been important to the development of theory and to understanding how positionality may be disturbed. But not every disturbance of positionality necessarily creates a new subject, as the analysis of *Sarrasine* demonstrated:

'Sarrasine's political stance can be called reactionary . . . it looks backwards to old social positions, seeing new positions as a disturbance of exchange, of substitution.'

Equally, the creation of new subjects must take off from ground which has some means of making itself intelligible. How this may be done is an important question for those attempting to work within television from a critical position. They would welcome some help with working out strategies for shifting positions in order to re-define what society represents to itself as 'reality', strategies which would take account of the problem of only being able to experiment within certain limits of what is held to be intelligible. Unintelligibility is exactly what the mass media cannot afford.

(vii) 'And thirdly, that the esoteric way the articles drawing on these developments of psychoanalysis have been presented in *Screen*, represent. . . .'

This is no fear; this is the truth. But the esoteric nature of *Screen* cannot be blamed on the writings of Freud and Lacan. Both are a good read. Lacan is at once poetic and precise. Of course such poetic precision is difficult to translate or explain, and short quotations, ripped from their context, usually make his work sound bizarre – eg the baby as *hommelette* – or very obscure:

'Desire is the desire for desire, the desire of the Other and it is subject to the Law. It is the default of the phallus that mounts up the symbolic debt. Desire reproduces the subject's relation to the lost object' (Lacan, *Ecrits*, from a longer quotation in *Language and Materialism*).

So explaining Lacan is difficult. Nevertheless, it seems to me that as an introductory book *Language and Materialism* could have tried harder. There is nothing wrong with expecting people to grapple with difficult ideas but there is also nothing wrong with giving them the best possible equipment to do so. More care could have been taken to define each new term as it was introduced – for example, the phrase 'chain of signifiers' appears on page 6 without any definition and without a reference in the index

130 for an explanation. I would also not have felt patronised by more summing up of difficult concepts and arguments. I appreciate that summaries can be dangerous, but the whole book is, after all, a summary.

The question of how one discourse can give an account of, or comment on another or itself, is an important one for semiology. In Barthes's early writings, semiology was conceived as a 'meta-language' which could 'demask' or 'demythify' the systems of signification of, for example, fashion magazine writing. This conception was later rejected:

'The method of "demythication" is that of creating a meta-language which can unveil the systematicity of another language. The language analysed is put in the position of a signified, re-presented by the metalanguage. However, this method becomes untenable with the realisation of the primacy of the signifier within signification: signification then appears to be a productivity (which presupposes the production of certain positions for the speaking subject), rather than a system that can be operated, or "summed up" in a metalanguage by a transcendent subject.'

But the main task that *Language and Materialism* sets itself is to re-present for the reader the concepts and development of the discourse of a theory of the subject 'summed up' in the metalanguage of an introductory text. At the same time, however, the book is itself a productivity, bringing into relation things that have not appeared before between the covers of one book, making the reader the intelligibility of that relation. The position inscribed for the reader is the fixed and predictable one of a didactic text. Ideas are either related in the context of a chapter specifically about their relation (eg Chapter 5 'Marxism, Language and Ideology') or by a number of flash-forwards, introduced by 'as we shall see in the following chapter', which corrects theoretical positions as the exposition progresses. This, though sometimes confusing, is usually helpful. However, there is a shock in store for the reader who leaps confidently from the concepts in the early part and hits the convolution of Kristeva in Chapter 7.

Now that *Language and Materialism* has given us an orientation to the background reading and now that the background reading is mostly translated into English, more people will have a chance of participating in the debate. It is surely worth spending some time considering the language of this debate:

'and if I know the truth, make it heard . . . provocative to the point of burlesque, or perceptible only to the practised eye, according to whether I wish to be heard by the mob or by the few' (Lacan, *Ecrits*, London, Tavistock, 1977, p 154).

We could begin by examining our assumptions about the 'mob' and the 'few'.

(viii) ' . . . a lack of real engagement with the politico-cultural issues which should form the context of Screen's work.' 131

Seventh fear: Or, 'I just can't see the bloody Marxism in it!' *Language and Materialism* points out that 'the encounter of Freud and Marx is not exactly a new one. Fromm, Reich, Marcuse and Habermas, to name just a few, bear witness to the importance of such a question for this century.' There is the problem, however, that some of these names also bear witness to what many 'comrades at the base' most fear: another anti-materialist 'modernisation':

'Gramscian or Togliattian Marxists, Hegelian-Existentialist Marxists, Neo-positivising Marxists, Freudian or Structuralist Marxists, despite the profound dissensions which otherwise divide them, are at one in rejecting all suspicion of collusion with 'vulgar' or 'mechanical' materialism; and they do so with such zeal as to cast out, together with mechanism or vulgarity, materialism tout court' (Timpanaro, *Considerations on Materialism*, London, NLB 1974).

So what is wrong with 'unmodernised' Marxism as it stands? *Language and Materialism* begins its explanations with a quotation from *Capital*:

'We have seen that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general. The latter is as much a production process of material conditions of human life as a process taking place under *specific historical and economic production relations*, producing and reproducing these production relations themselves, and thereby also the bearers of this process, their material conditions of existence and their *mutual relations*, ie their particular socio-economic form' (K Marx, *Capital*, Moscow/London, Vol III, p 818).

The authors draw from this the fundamental conception that although production of the means of subsistence is what *finally* determines the form of a particular society, it is not the only nor necessarily the principal determinant. But this is not the only conception they draw from the passage:

'The quotation also shows that Marxist thought takes account of three practices within a mode of production. The term 'practice' here designates a particular form of productive activity by which the social formation is produced and transformed. The idea is latent in this quotation: it has since been developed by Engels, Mao and Althusser.'

Readers of *Screen* will probably have no problems with this notion of the three practices – economic, political and ideological – but non-Althusserian readers may find the idea so latent in the quotation as to be invisible.

132 Here a radical break in Marx's thought is being posited as the 'cause' of different readings of Marxism. Apart from the (relatively uninteresting) fact that many historians have questioned the notion of the break in Marx's problematic (see, for example, D McLellan, *Marx*, London, Fontana 1976) it is unfortunate that what is an important plea for an anti-humanist reading of Marx should have been made to rest on the notion of Marx as auteur rather than on the issue of different positions within Marxism. I mention this, as I mentioned Timpanaro earlier, not to provide 'balance' from a non-Althusserian viewpoint but so that those of us interested in theorising signifying practice may be clear about the position with which we are identified at the moment and the charges of esoteric intellectualism levelled against that position. It is important that we take great care over how we explain not only our use of psychoanalytic concepts but also our commitment to further developing Althusser's development of Marxism. In this way it may be possible to work on the theory *Language and Materialism* proposes with the cooperation of other Marxists rather than in spite of them. In my view the theory proposed is certainly worth developing, for reasons which should already be apparent from this review and also because it is a theory which can certainly be a help in understanding and fighting the oppression of women, since it begins to explain the construction of sexuality in the social formation. As *Language and Materialism* points out: 'In recognising these problems, the women's movement could be said to have become the political avant-garde since 1968, because the specificity of its problems – the sexual and familial construction of women – has raised in a political arena precisely the problems which the developments of semiology have encountered.'

The theory does have radical potential and the authors of *Language and Materialism* clearly have high hopes for it:

'Thus the political significance of the theoretical developments we are examining are very great. In pointing to the need for a theory of ideology and language that accounts for the construction of the subject in representations by which he or she can act, these developments have pointed to a central failing in Marxist thought and practice. This has hindered the development of a mass movement for radical change.'

But it would be ludicrous to think that we are going to start a mass movement for radical change unless we are prepared to be self-critical about the way we explain the theoretical developments to others, both Marxists and non-Marxists. The greatest danger for the concepts we have been discussing is not that they will be snapped up and used 'in a way that ignores their contribution to a revolutionary understanding of the subject in sociality'; it is that no-one will notice them.